Tiger Linked to AIDS

December 14, 2009

HIV might have originated from an ancient tiger that lived thousands or even millions of years ago, according to a new study published in the journal *Nature Structural & Molecular Biology* and reported on by HealthDay.

According to researchers, who were studying how HIV hijacks cells and uses them to reproduce, genetic material from this species of tiger remains present in HIV today. Study authors speculate HIV might have originated as a cat virus before it moved on to chimps and, ultimately, humans.

These findings likely won't lead to any immediate breakthroughs in HIV treatment, researchers said, but they give more insight into how HIV works and where it came from.

"Unless you really understand how these viruses work, the exact step-by-step chemical process, then you can't really rationally design a new clever kind of therapy that may be effective against the virus," said study coauthor Robert Bambara, chairman of the department of biochemistry at the University of Rochester in New York.

However, researchers will now use these findings to determine whether simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV)—a cousin of HIV that infects primates—also carries the gene. If the presence of the tiger gene is linked to the virus's strength, it could lead to improved treatment for humans.

This research could also help researchers better understand the H1N1 flu virus, which has also picked up genetic material from different species.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/tiger-aids-link-17714-1831