Treatment: Merck’s Doravirine

Compared with a regimen based on Prezista, doravirine was better for blood lipids, including cholesterol and triglycerides.

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Merck’s experimental non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor doravirine suppressed HIV at a higher rate than Norvir (ritonavir)-boosted Prezista (darunavir) 96 weeks into a clinical trial that pitted the two medications against each other. Additionally, regimens based on doravirine were associated with much better lab test results for blood lipids, including cholesterol and triglycerides, compared with regimens based on Prezista. The study included 766 people with HIV who had not previously been treated for the virus. They were evenly randomized to receive either doravirine or Norvir-boosted Prezista, each in combination with Truvada (tenofovir disoproxil fumarate/emtricitabine) or Epzicom (abacavir/lamivudine). At the 96-week mark, 73 percent of those in the doravirine group had a fully suppressed viral load compared with 66 percent of those in the Prezista group. Merck applied to the Food and Drug Administration for approval of doravirine in January.

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