Examining the Long-term Impact of HIV-Related Wasting

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HIV-associated wasting can impact more than just body mass, but overall quality of life and physical function as well. Publishing their findings in the journal AIDS, researchers studied 85 HIV-positive men diagnosed with wasting, along with 249 HIV-positive men without wasting and 338 HIV-negative men.

Eighty percent of the study visits were post-1996, when combination antiretroviral therapy became widely available.

The assessments of the men with wasting were conducted a median four years after they were diagnosed with the condition. By then they had regained some of the weight they had lost, but weighed about 18 to 20 pounds less than the HIV-positive men who did not have wasting. The researchers believe that the weight the men with wasting did regain was mostly in the form of fat, while the weight they had lost was mostly in lean muscle mass.

The men with wasting had lower grip strength and lower quality of life when compared with the HIV-positive men who did not have wasting. Compared with HIV-negative men, the men with wasting had lower physical quality of life but higher mental quality of life.

Looking just at the HIV-positive men and controlling for lowest-ever CD4 count and AIDS diagnoses, the researchers found that wasting did not make a significant difference in physical quality of life.

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