Women Are Vastly Underrepresented in HIV Clinical Trials

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Clinical trials of HIV cures, vaccines and treatments fail to include sufficient proportions of women, notwithstanding the fact that women make up half of the world's HIV population, Reuters Health reports. Publishing their findings in the Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes, researchers reviewed publications of 387 antiretroviral (ARV) studies, 53 vaccine studies and 104 cure studies.

The median proportion of women in each type of trial was 19 percent in ARV studies, 38 percent in vaccine studies, and 11 percent in cure studies.

The type of funding backing the studies was not associated with the proportion of female participants in the vaccine or cure trials. In ARV studies, those funded by private non-commercial entities had the highest proportion of female participation, while trials funded with public dollars had a median 16.7 percent rate of participation by women.

Despite federal polices in place to address the underrepresentation of women in HIV trials, a median 19.6 percent of women participated in trials funded by the National Institutes of Health, compared with a 22.3 percent female participation rate in trials funded by other sources.

To read the study abstract, click here.

To read the Reuters article, click here.

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