HIV and Hepatitis C Coinfection Raises Cognitive Impairment Risk for Men

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A new study has found that HIV and hepatitis C virus (HCV) coinfection is associated with an elevated risk of cognitive impairment among men, aidsmap reports. Researchers from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs published their findings in the online edition of the Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes.

The scientists compared four groups of men: 19 monoinfected with hep C, 17 coinfected with HIV and hep C, 14 monoinfected with HIV, and a 28-person control group with neither infection. The investigators screened the men for depression and evaluated various forms of cognitive function among them, including attention, memory and fine motor speed. None of the participants were using drugs or alcohol or had cirrhosis at the time of the study. Coinfected participants had more depression symptoms than those with hep C monoinfection and the control groups. About 65 percent of coinfected participants were considered impaired, compared with 42 percent of the hep C monoinfected group, 29 percent of the monoinfected cohort and 18 percent of those in the control.

In their paper, the researchers write, “We were able to detect a mild, yet significant impairment in the cognition among the coinfected group. [T]his targeted study indicates that coinfection in males is sufficient to push this group over the threshold into mild impairment and [that] high viral load in HCV monoinfection may impact cognition.”

To read the aidsmap story, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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