CD4 Cells Decline After People With HIV Contract Hepatitis C

This holds true regardless of how long they've had HIV or whether they're on antiretrovirals.

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Contracting hepatitis C virus (HCV) is associated with a sustained, albeit impermanent, decline in CD4 cells among people with HIV, Infectious Disease Advisor reports. This holds true regardless of how long individuals had HIV prior to contracting HCV or whether they are taking antiretrovirals (ARVs).

Publishing their findings in the journal AIDS, researchers assembled a cohort of HIV-positive men who have sex with men (MSM) who contracted HCV while participating in 17 cohorts within the CASCADE Collaboration. The date when each man contracted HIV was well estimated in all cases.

The cohort included 214 men who were on ARVs and 147 who had never taken ARVs. These two groups were matched with HIV-positive men without HCV according to the duration of their HIV infection and whether they were on ARVs. The control groups included 5,384 men on ARVs and 3,954 men off ARVs.

CD4 levels declined during the first two to three years after HIV-positive men contracted HCV, regardless of whether they were on ARVs, and then became comparable to men monoinfected with HIV (meaning they did not have HCV).

The length of time that men had been living with HIV prior to contracting HCV was not associated with their subsequent HIV viral load or CD4 count.

For about a two-year period, the post-HCV-infection HIV viral load of those men with HIV who never took ARVs was lower or comparable to those monoinfected with HIV, and afterward tended to be higher than that of the men in the control group. Among HIV-positive men on ARVs, contracting HCV was not associated with developing a detectable HIV viral load.

To read the Infectious Disease Advisor article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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