

# Asthma risk increases in children treated for HIV

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Children whose immune systems rebound after treatment with potent anti-viral drugs for HIV infection face an increased risk of developing asthma, said a federally funded consortium of researchers led by those from Baylor College of Medicine in a report that appears online in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*.

"We think this occurs because important immune system components called CD4 cells increase in children treated with highly active antiretroviral therapy," said Dr. William T. Shearer, professor of pediatrics and immunology at BCM in Houston and chief of the allergy and immunology service at Texas Children's Hospital. He is also senior author of the report. CD4 cells are thought to be associated with the inflammation in the lung tissue that accompanies asthma. When CD4 cells decline in children with HIV, their asthma symptoms also decrease.

Shearer and his colleagues evaluated the use of asthma medication among children with HIV who took the anti-HIV drugs and those who did not. They found that about one-third of those on the anti-HIV medications used asthma drugs compared to 11.5 percent of those who did not take anti-HIV drugs.

Shearer said a study that evaluates the lung function of children with HIV on anti-viral therapy would help explain how an increase in the immune system affects the risk of asthma.

"This AIDS model of asthma might help understand at a molecular level

what is causing the current epidemic of asthma among children more generally," he said.

Source: Baylor College of Medicine

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