

Med student finds link between weight gain after HIV treatment and mortality

March 19 2015, by Ziba Kashef

Bianca Yuh, a third-year student at Yale School of Medicine, spent last summer working on her thesis with the Veterans Aging Cohort Study, a key source of data on HIV-infected veterans. She was interested in investigating factors that determine positive and negative outcomes for older people with HIV infection after they receive treatment. Her findings, published March 11 in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, suggest an easy intervention that requires no additional medication or diagnostic evaluation.

Yuh and her co-authors, including Janet Tate, associate research scientist in medicine at Yale School of Medicine, looked at weight status in more than 4,000 HIV-infected older adults when they started antiretroviral therapy (ART) and one year later. They also analyzed patient mortality rates within five years.

The researchers found that a weight gain of 10-20 pounds was associated with lower mortality in normal-weight, HIV-infected individuals. However, there was no benefit in gaining weight for patients who were overweight or obese at the start of treatment, the study showed.

Because HIV infection increases metabolic demand on patients, weight gain may indicate controlled infection and improved health, the study noted. The findings suggest that providers should advise patients that some weight gain is to be expected after ART initiation, but tell patients who are already overweight or obese to avoid [weight gain](#) with exercise and a healthy diet.

More information: "Weight Change After Antiretroviral Therapy and Mortality" *Clin Infect Dis*. first published online March 11, 2015 [DOI: 10.1093/cid/civ192](https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/civ192)

Provided by Yale University

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