

Researchers in Britain think they might have developed a cure for HIV

October 3 2016, by Bob Yirka



HIV-1 Virus. Credit: J Roberto Trujillo/Wikipedia

(Medical Xpress)—British newspaper *The Sunday Times* is [reporting](#) that a team of researchers in the U.K. believe they may have cured a man that was HIV positive. If the claims turn out to be true, it would mark the first time a person has been cured of the infection without having to resort to a bone marrow transplant. The patient's name has been withheld to protect his privacy, but it was reported that he was first in line among 50 infected people to undergo a new treatment process that has been what the team described as one of the first real attempts at a full cure for the disease.

Significant progress has been made in treating HIV patients over the past several decades—for those living in countries with modern health care systems, a positive test result is no longer a [death sentence](#). Many people have been living with the virus in their bodies for decades. Still, scientists would like to find a cure for the disease that is caused by the virus, which would involve completely eradicating the virus from the body. A cure would save the lives of millions of people in third world countries and make life easier for countless others. It is believed that approximately 37 million people across the globe are currently infected.

The project has involved a collaboration between University College London, Imperial College London, King's College London and Cambridge and Oxford Universities and has been paid for by Britain's NHS. The treatment they have developed is a two-stage process. The first stage involves recognizing and killing HIV infected cells using antiretroviral drugs that have been used before to treat HIV patients. The second stage is where the true innovation has taken place—it involves activating dormant T-cells that have been infected, which allows the immune system to find and kill them. The researchers on the project have reported that the first patient currently tests as virus-free; but they know it is not a guarantee that he is truly cured—a baby born in 2010 from a mother with HIV, for example, was given drugs that doctors hoped would protect the baby from infection; they were hopeful because

the infant was virus-free for at least five months—but two years later, the child tested positive. The patients undergoing treatment in the new experimental program will be monitored for five years.

© 2016 Medical Xpress

Citation: Researchers in Britain think they might have developed a cure for HIV (2016, October 3) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-10-britain-hiv.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.