

10-year lifespan gain for some HIV patients: study

May 11 2017



HIV infecting a human cell. Credit: NIH

The life expectancy of HIV-infected people in Europe and the United

States has been boosted by a decade since anti-AIDS drugs became available in the mid-1990s, researchers said Thursday.

In fact, a 20-year-old who began treatment any time since 2008, now has an expected lifespan, about 78 years, approaching that of an uninfected person, said a study in *The Lancet HIV*.

Life expectancy in the "general population", excluding people infected with the AIDS-causing virus, is 79 years for men and 85 for women in France, and 78 for men and 82 for women in the United States, said the researchers.

People who started taking [antiretroviral treatment](#) (ART) in 2008 or thereafter lived longer, healthier lives than those who started treatment in earlier years, they added.

This was likely because modern drugs have fewer toxic side-effects, there are now more options for people with a drug-resistant HIV strain, and better treatment of other infections and conditions.

"With the perception that HIV-positive people will live into old age, clinicians are screening for and treating comorbidities (diseases on top of HIV) more aggressively," said the paper.

These included heart disease, hepatitis C and cancer.

Conducted in Europe and America, the study included data on more than 88,000 HIV patients.

"Information about [life expectancy](#) in people living with HIV and the knowledge that it could be approaching that of the [general population](#) is important to motivate at-risk individuals to test for HIV and convince those infected to start ART immediately," said the study.

It could also "decrease stigmatisation of people living with HIV and help them to obtain insurance or employment".

ART, a cocktail of three or more drugs that block the virus from replicating, first became widely used in 1996.

It does not cure the disease, and treatment is lifelong.

The World Health Organization recommends that ART be started in all people as soon as possible after diagnosis.

Many people in poorer nations are diagnosed too late, if at all, and [treatment](#) is not always readily available or affordable.

© 2017 AFP

Citation: 10-year lifespan gain for some HIV patients: study (2017, May 11) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-05-year-lifespan-gain-hiv-patients.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.