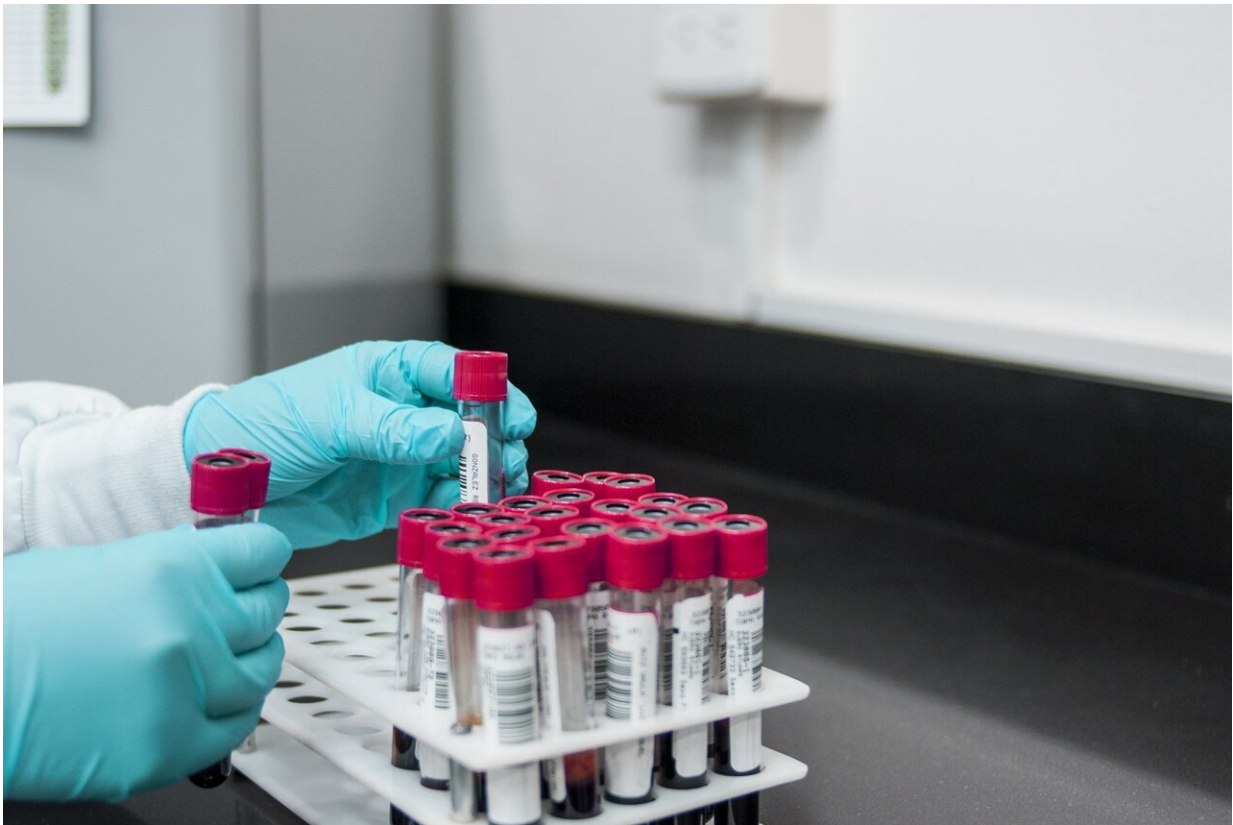


Blood test figures in cancer risk for people with HIV

March 18 2022, by Paul Govern



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In the clinical care of people living with HIV, various types of blood cells are routinely counted to assess the immune system, among them $CD4^+$ cells, or T helper cells, and $CD8^+$ cells, or cytotoxic T cells.

These types of white blood cells work together to clear infections and prevent and kill [cancer cells](#). While a normal CD4/CD8 ratio is about 2:1, it's typically lower in people with HIV.

A large observational study published March 16 in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* finds that, among adult patients with HIV, those who have lower CD4/CD8 ratios have a markedly higher risk of developing cancer.

Led by researchers at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, the study looked at data over a 20-year period from 83,893 [adult patients](#) with HIV in whom 5,628 cancer diagnoses occurred.

Infectious diseases specialist Jessica Castilho, MD, MPH, epidemiologist Staci Sudenga, Ph.D., and colleagues found that, compared to people with HIV whose CD4/CD8 ratios were in the top quartile ($>.80$), those whose ratios were in the bottom quartile (

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