

# COVID-19 found to increase the risk of severe cardiovascular problems in people with HIV

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A study led by the Centre for Epidemiological Studies on STIs and AIDS of Catalonia (CEEISCAT)—a group from the Germans Trias i

Pujol Research Institute (IGTP), the Fundació Lluita contra les Infeccions (FLI), and Odense University Hospital (OUH)—has revealed that people living with HIV who have experienced an episode of COVID-19 face a significant increase in the risk of cardiovascular diseases in the year following infection.

The project, conducted within the framework of the PISCIS Cohort of individuals living with HIV in Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, examined over 18,000 people with HIV, 4,000 of whom had been diagnosed with COVID-19 between 2020 and 2022.

Of all the individuals studied, 832 had suffered a cardiovascular illness, and it was noted that those who had contracted COVID-19 were at a 30% increased risk of developing cardiovascular diseases a year after the coronavirus infection, particularly within the first six months.

According to the researcher who has led the study, the physician Raquel Martín-Iguacel, "The most common cardiovascular diseases we have observed in this group have been [blood clots](#) in the lungs or legs, as well as [heart failure](#) and various heart diseases."

Martín-Iguacel, an associate physician in the Department of Infectious Diseases at Odense University Hospital (Denmark) and a researcher at CEEISCAT, says, "The importance of COVID-19 vaccination in people with HIV as a key preventive measure."

The study has identified several factors associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases among people living with HIV, including age, being a heterosexual man or woman, the presence of previous cardiovascular disease, and other conditions such as chronic kidney or liver [disease](#).

Martín-Iguacel concludes, "It is vital to urge patients who have had

COVID-19 to be aware of this increased risk and to manage other cardiovascular risk factors, such as smoking, diabetes, hypertension, or high cholesterol."

Likewise, the study serves as a warning to physicians taking care of individuals with HIV, who will need to consider this increased cardiovascular risk during the first year post-COVID. There are various therapeutic strategies under study to mitigate this risk that must be closely monitored.

The research is [published](#) in the journal *Clinical Microbiology and Infection*.

**More information:** Raquel Martín-Iguacel et al, Major cardiovascular events after COVID-19 in people with HIV, *Clinical Microbiology and Infection* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.cmi.2024.02.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmi.2024.02.006)

Provided by Germans Trias i Pujol Research Institute

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