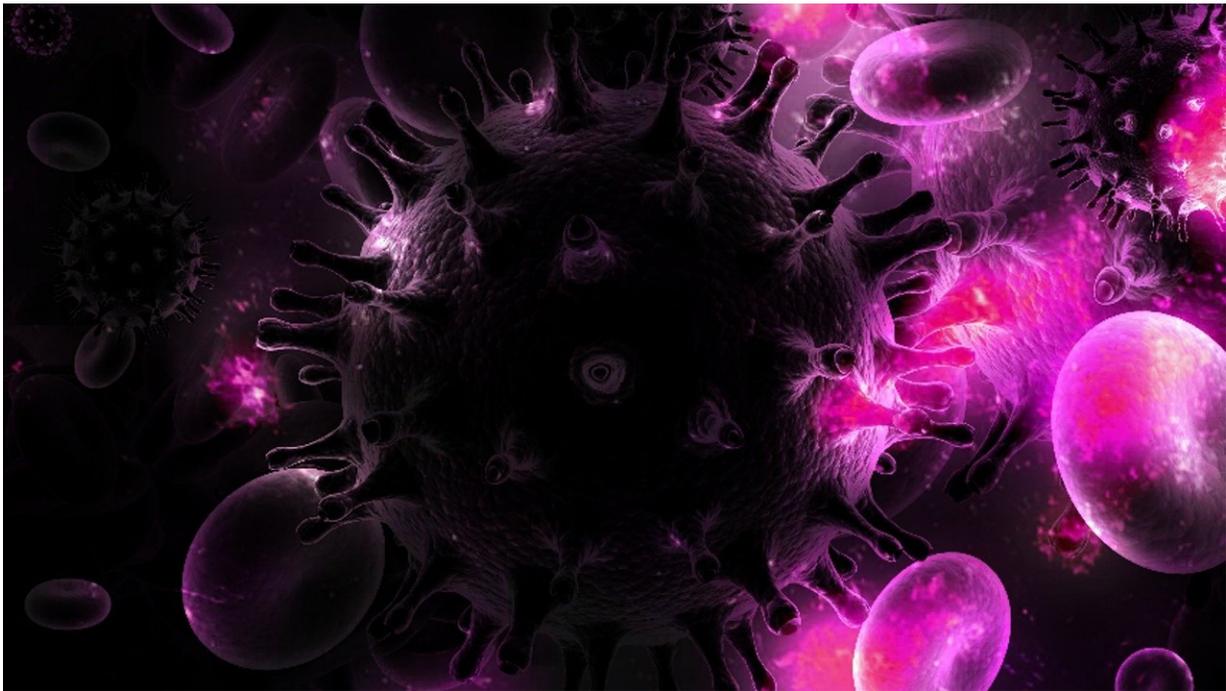


Persistent HIV DNA in spinal fluid may be associated with cognitive challenges

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Investigators from the AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG), the world's largest and longest-established HIV research network, today announced that the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* published new findings from the ACTG HIV Reservoirs Cohort Study (A5321). The study found that HIV DNA remained in the cerebrospinal fluid of half of participants with well-managed HIV (virologic suppression in the plasma),

confirming that the central nervous system (CNS) is a major reservoir for latent HIV. Individuals who harbored HIV DNA in the cerebrospinal fluid were more likely than other study participants to experience cognitive deficits on neurocognitive testing.

"The persistence of HIV in sanctuary sites in the [human body](#), even in the presence of long-term therapy, is a challenge to HIV remission and cure that the ACTG is actively working to address," said ACTG Chair Judith Currier, M.D., MSc, University of California Los Angeles.

"Because [neurocognitive function](#) can be compromised even in individuals whose HIV is well treated, it is very important that we understand HIV persistence in the CNS so that we can develop strategies to treat it. This study provides preliminary insights into these challenges."

This substudy in the ACTG HIV Reservoirs Cohort Study (A5321) was led by Serena Spudich, M.D., Yale University, the late Kevin Robertson, Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and John Mellors, M.D., University of Pittsburgh. The study included 69 participants with well-treated HIV who had their [cerebrospinal fluid](#) and blood collected and underwent neurocognitive assessments, which included tests of memory, learning, [motor function](#), and more. Participants were mostly male (97 percent) and had been on HIV treatment for a median of almost nine years, with a good response to medications (HIV viral loads in the plasma were all

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