

Miscellaneous News

CMV infection may contribute to the size of the latent HIV reservoir

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The presence of cytomegalovirus (CMV) in blood and semen is associated with higher levels of HIV DNA in blood, investigators from the United States report in the online edition of Journal of Infectious Diseases. The study involved gay men recently infected with HIV. The authors believe that CMV replication may increase the reservoir of cells latently infected with HIV.

This study demonstrated that presence of CMV in PBMC [peripheral blood mononuclear cells] and in seminal plasma of HIV infected ART-naïve MSM was associated with higher levels of proviral HIV DNA, write the authors. It also found that simultaneous detectable CMV in semen and PBMC was associated with the highest levels of HIV DNA in PBMC.

Over 75% of HIV-positive gay men have at least one herpes virus actively replicating in their semen and the most common is CMV. Co-infection with CMV has been associated with accelerated HIV disease progression and increased immune activation. Investigators from San Diego hypothesised that it could also be an important factor in determining the size of the reservoir of cells with latent HIV infection.

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