

Dementia persists despite HAART

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An Australian study has found that while people diagnosed with AIDS dementia complex (ADC) are surviving significantly longer due to improved [antiretroviral](#) [1] medication or other substance which is active against retroviruses such as HIV. [efficacy](#) [2] (Of a drug or treatment). The maximum ability of a drug or treatment to produce a result regardless of dosage. A drug passes efficacy trials if it is effective at the dose tested and against the illness for which it is prescribed. In the standard procedure, Phase II clinical trials gauge efficacy, and Phase III trials confirm it., the prevalence of ADC has risen since the advent of highly active antiretroviral therapy ([HAART](#) [3])

The study, conducted by Dr Greg Dore and colleagues for the Australian National HIV Surveillance Committee and published in the July edition of the journal AIDS, is one of only a handful of studies of ADC in the HAART era. By examining AIDS notification data from across Australia during the period 1993–2000, the investigators sought to determine the impact of HAART on survival rates of people diagnosed with ADC.

The effect of HAART on ADC survival rates was striking, with median survival after an ADC diagnosis increasing from 11.9 months in the pre-HAART period (1993–1995) to 48.2 months post HAART. The improved outlook was especially strong for ADC patients with CD4 counts under 100, increasing from 5.1 to 38.5 months.

But the research also found that increased numbers of people with AIDS are being diagnosed with ADC. “Despite declining ADC incidence, the prevalence of ADC appears to have increased in Australia since 1995,” the report says. “This trend in ADC prevalence is largely a result of the marked improvement in survival following ADC.”

The report authors conclude that further studies on the effect of HAART on ADC prognosis are needed, and that “an increasing number of people living with ADC indicates a continuing need for ADC treatment and care services.”

About 6.8 percent of people diagnosed with AIDS in Australia have ADC, the report found. ADC is a degenerative disease which causes symptoms ranging from difficulty concentrating and forgetfulness to deteriorations in motor skills.

—AIDS 17: 1539–1545, 2003

- [dementia](#)

Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/122>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/486>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/96>