

Treating earlier: at 500 T-cells?

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Speaking at IAS 2008, Dr Andrew Carr from St Vincent's Hospital Sydney said that the increasing numbers of people with HIV developing non-AIDS illnesses (such as cardiovascular disease or renal problems) has prompted discussions amongst physicians as to whether the guidelines for starting treatment (currently at 350 T-cells) might be better changed to between 350 and 500 T-cells.

"We don't currently know what makes these diseases more of a problem in people with HIV," said Dr Carr. "Of course there are the usual co-factors like smoking for cardiovascular disease but even accounting for these, the rates on non- AIDS illnesses are significant. The SMART Study to start in early 2009 could provide some of the answers. It may be related to the inflammation caused by HIV but at this stage we can't be certain."

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