

HIV/AIDS: New data backs early HIV treatment cost-effectiveness

JOHANNESBURG: Modelling has demonstrated the benefits and now data has provided the proof as researchers in Haiti have found that earlier HIV treatment is cost-effective, reducing the risk of death by 75 percent among HIV patients for just US\$6.25 more a month.



In 2009, researchers released the results of a then unpublished Haitian clinical trial. Conducted among 800 HIV patients, the study showed that those who received antiretrovirals (ARVs) when their immune systems were stronger - at higher CD4 counts of 200 to 350 - were less likely to die than their peers who waited until their CD4 counts fell to 200.

About five months later, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued new HIV treatment guidelines that advised countries to start HIV patients on treatment at a new higher CD4 count of 350 instead of 200.

Now those researchers have released the world's first and possibly only cost-effectiveness study on earlier HIV treatment tied to a randomized clinical trial. Published in the September 2011 edition of the medical journal, *PLoS Medicine*, the study is based on data from the original Haitian study that allowed researchers to calculate costs associated with the first three years of earlier treatment - including everything from drug and family caregiver costs to subsidies for patient transport to and from the clinic.

Read the [full article](http://www.irinnews.org) on www.irinnews.org.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>