

# FIRST WOMAN REPORTED CURED OF HIV AFTER STEM CELL TRANSPLANT

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A U.S. patient with leukemia has become the first woman and the third person to date to be cured of HIV after receiving a stem cell transplant from a donor who was naturally resistant to the virus that causes AIDS.

The case of a middle-aged woman of mixed race, presented at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver, is also the first involving umbilical cord blood.

Since receiving the cord blood to treat her acute myeloid leukemia - a cancer that starts in blood-forming cells in the bone marrow - the woman has been in remission and free of the virus for 14 months.

"This is now the third report of a cure in this setting, and the first in a woman living with HIV," Sharon Lewin, President-Elect of the International AIDS Society, said.

The case is part of a larger U.S.-backed study led by Dr. Yvonne Bryson of the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), and Dr. Deborah Persaud of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. It aims to follow 25 people with HIV who undergo a transplant with stem cells taken from umbilical cord blood for the treatment of cancer.

Patients in the trial first undergo chemotherapy to kill off the cancerous immune cells. Doctors then transplant stem cells from individuals with a specific genetic mutation in which they lack receptors used by the virus to infect cells.

Scientists believe these individuals then develop an immune system resistant to HIV.

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