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Changing patterns of cancer incidence in the early- and late-HAART periods: the Swiss HIV Cohort Study

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BACKGROUND: The advent of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) in 1996 led to a decrease in the incidence of Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL), but not of other cancers, among people with HIV or AIDS (PWHA). It also led to marked increases in their life expectancy.

METHODS: We conducted a record-linkage study between the Swiss HIV Cohort Study and nine Swiss cantonal cancer registries. In total, 9429 PWHA provided 20 615, 17 690, and 15 410 person-years in the pre-, early-, and late-HAART periods, respectively. Standardised incidence ratios in PWHA *vs* the general population, as well as age-standardised, and age-specific incidence rates were computed for different periods.

RESULTS: Incidence of KS and NHL decreased by several fold between the pre- and early-HAART periods, and additionally declined from the early- to the late-HAART period. Incidence of cancers of the anus, liver, non-melanomatous skin, and Hodgkin's lymphoma increased in the early- compared with the pre-HAART period, but not during the late-HAART period. The incidence of all non-AIDS-defining cancers (NADCs) combined was similar in all periods, and approximately double that in the general population.

CONCLUSIONS: Increases in the incidence of selected NADCs after the introduction of HAART were largely accounted for by the ageing of PWHA.

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