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## HIV LINK TO HEART ATTACK RISK

PEOPLE infected with HIV are almost 50 per cent more likely to have a heart attack than those who aren't infected with the virus, even after taking into account their other health risks, according to a US study.

Researchers, whose report appeared in *Jama Internal Medicine*, aren't sure what explains the higher heart attack rate in HIV-positive people, but they speculate it's a combination of the effects of HIV itself and the antiretroviral drugs used to treat it.

"It's a complicated picture," said Matthew Freiberg, who led

the study at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine in Pennsylvania. "We're still trying to understand the mechanisms."

Because treatment now allows HIV-infected people to live longer, researchers have started turning their attention to other health problems they face later in life, such as heart disease.

The study included more than 82,000 US veterans, almost all men. About one-third of them were infected with HIV. During an average of almost six years, 871 of the study participants had a heart attack, of which 176 were fatal.

**Reuters**