

Headline	Many HIV patients skip medications to drink — study		
MediaTitle	Borneo Post (KK)		
Date	03 Nov 2012	Color	Black/white
Section	World	Circulation	88,150
Page No	b8	Readership	166,173
Language	English	ArticleSize	100 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 576
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 1,728



Many HIV patients skip medications to drink — study

ABOUT half of HIV patients on antiretroviral therapy skipped their medications whenever they were drinking alcohol, according to a US study - an ill-advised behavior that researchers say could lead to higher viral loads.

The study, published in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, for a year followed nearly 200 people with HIV who were on antiretrovirals and drank alcohol. It found that 51 percent stopped taking their medications while drinking.

Lapses could be due to forgetfulness while under the influence, but a widespread — and erroneous — belief that mixing alcohol and HIV drugs can be toxic appears to play a role.

“The harms caused by missing their medications far outweigh the harms caused by mixing the two, if the person doesn’t have liver disease,” said Seth Kalichman, a professor at the University of Connecticut and lead author of the study.

Drinking has been known to interfere with people’s adherence to their medications, but researchers said the consequences of inconsistent use of HIV medications can be more severe.

Anti-retroviral drugs suppress the HIV virus, and patients must take the medications continuously to prevent the virus from surging. Additionally, going on and off the drugs can lead to drug resistance. — AFP