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| Headline | Some HIV patients living longer? | | |
| MediaTitle | Daily Express (KK) | | |
| Date | 16 May 2017 | Color | Black/white |
| Section | Health | Circulation | 25,055 |
| Page No | 28 | Readership | 75,165 |
| Language | English | ArticleSize | 83 cm ² |
| Journalist | N/A | AdValue | RM 171 |
| Frequency | Daily (EM) | PR Value | RM 513 |



Some HIV patients living longer?

PARIS: The life expectancy of HIV-infected people in Europe and the United States has been boosted by a decade since anti-AIDS drugs became available in the mid-1990s, researchers said.

In fact, a 20-year-old who began treatment any time since 2008, now has an expected lifespan, about 78 years, approaching that of an uninfected person, said a study in *The Lancet HIV*.

Life expectancy in the "general population", excluding people infected with the AIDS-causing virus, is 79 years for men and 85 for women in France, and 78 for men and 82 for women in the United States, said the researchers.

People who started taking antiretroviral treatment (ART) in 2008 or thereafter lived longer, healthier lives than those who started treatment in earlier years, they added. This was likely because modern drugs have fewer toxic side-effects, there are now more options for people with a drug-resistant HIV strain, and better treatment of other infections and conditions.

"With the perception that HIV-positive people will live into old age, clinicians are screening for and treating comorbidities (diseases on top of HIV) more aggressively," said the paper.

These included heart disease, hepatitis C and cancer. Conducted in Europe and America, the study included data on more than 88,000 HIV patients. - AFP