



# California Drug Counseling

## U.N. Agency Falls Short of AIDS Treatment Goal

The World Health Organization has fallen well short of its goal of getting 3 million AIDS patients in treatment by the end of 2005, with fewer than half that number now receiving life-sustaining antiretroviral therapy.

The program tripled the number of people in low- and moderate-income countries receiving drugs between 2003 and 2005, but overall, only one in every five people requiring treatment now receives it — a total of 1.3 million out of an estimated 6.5 million with AIDS.

Fewer than 10% of HIV-infected pregnant women are receiving the drugs, and 2,000 infected babies are born every day.

Each year, more than 570,000 children younger than 15 die of AIDS, most of them having acquired it from their mothers at birth, according to the report.

An estimated 3 million people die of acquired immune deficiency syndrome each

year, and WHO officials believe that the "3 by 5" program prevented as many as 350,000 deaths in 2005.

"People have died and continue to die of what is a treatable disease," said Dr. Kevin De Cock, director of the WHO's HIV/AIDS Department.

The program was launched by the WHO and UNAIDS on World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, 2003, with high hopes that the drug benefits achieved in industrialized countries could be quickly spread to the developing world.

But within a year it was clear that the 2005 goal could not be reached, primarily because of insufficient money, the high cost of drugs and the poor health infrastructure in many of the most affected countries.

Global spending on AIDS totaled \$8.3

*Continued on page 2, see U.N. Agency Falls Short*

## Energy Drinks and Alcohol Don't Mix

Mixing alcohol and energy drinks such as Red Bull have become increasingly popular, but the combination can result in a disconnect between perception and reality, Brazilian researchers report.

Although drinkers said they felt less tired and had a heightened sensation of pleasure after quaffing a Red Bull, in actual fact their abilities were still significantly impaired.

"This is just the combination that might lead to very bad judgments," said Dr. David L. Katz, an associate professor of

public health and director of the Prevention Research Center at the Yale University School of Medicine. "Feeling less intoxicated and more alert, one might get behind the wheel of a car, but with impaired coordination and reaction time, that decision might spell disaster."

The study, by researchers at the Federal University of Sao Paulo, appears in the April issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*.

The effects of the Red Bull and alcohol

*Cont. on page 3, see Energy Drinks and Alcohol*

### Inside this issue:

U.N. Agency Falls Short of AIDS Treatment Goal	1
Energy Drinks and Alcohol Don't Mix	1
Reports on New Type of AIDS Drugs Offer Hope to Patients	2

### Special points of interest:

- Each year, more than 570,000 children younger than 15 die of AIDS, most of them having acquired it from their mothers at birth.
- Red Bull and alcohol doesn't reduce the effects of alcohol -- it only makes you think it does.

## Reports on New Type of AIDS Drugs Offer Hope to Patients

---

Larry Holmes at the age of 43 is lucky to be alive, but after battling AIDS for 14 years he is fearful that his luck is running out.

Like thousands of other men who contracted the disease in the 1980s and were saved by the antiviral drug combinations that were developed in the mid-1990s, he has developed resistance to nearly all the available medications.

"As I kind of burned through the drugs, there was always something on the horizon," he said. "The docs have been looking for something else, but there hasn't been something else. It's the scariest it's been for a long time."

So Holmes and his doctors are encouraged by reports out of a scientific conference in Denver this week that researchers may have finally found a potent new class of AIDS drugs known as integrase inhibitors.

Nearly all of the successful antiviral drugs on the market today attack one of two enzymes used by HIV to make copies of itself. The drugs that block those enzymes are known as either protease or reverse transcriptase inhibitors.

A third enzyme, integrase, has been a tempting target for years, but it has taken until now for scientists to come up with a pill that works against it.

New Jersey pharmaceuticals maker Merck & Co. has now run a successful test of its integrase inhibitor in a four-month trial involving 167 patients. It is enrolling volunteers in a large-scale study that, if equally successful, would put it on a track to apply for Food and Drug Administration approval in 2007.

Gilead Sciences of Foster City also reported at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections on Wednesday that its experimental integrase inhibitor dramatically reduced virus levels in a 10-day trial involving 40 patients.

Having tested positive for HIV in 1987, Holmes was prescribed treatment for AIDS in 1994 with one of the earliest antivirals, the drug known as ddI.

He eventually rallied under the combination "cocktails" of multiple AIDS drugs but saw his health slip away as he developed resistance to one combination after another.

Three years ago, the 6-foot-2-inch Holmes had seen his weight diminish to 130 pounds. His blood tests showed high levels of virus, and no CD4 cells -- the infection-fighting white blood cells.

His life was saved again, he said, by an experimental drug called T-1249.

*Continued on page 3, see New Types of AIDS Drugs*

## U.N. Agency Falls Short

---

*Continued from page 1*

billion in 2005, up from \$4.7 billion in 2003. Nearly half of that sum came from the United States through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

But the report predicts an \$18-billion shortfall in funding for 2005-07. If treatment coverage is to continue expanding, it says, at least \$22 billion a year will be required by 2008.

The price of drugs has been declining, by as much as 53% for some regimens. Even so, the funding agencies are still forced to rely on branded drugs for many uses, particularly when first-line drugs fail. Increasing the number of generic drugs would enable the program to get more coverage for its money, according to the report.

Identifying AIDS patients and delivering the drugs are a particular problem in sub-Saharan Africa, home to more than 20 of the world's 25 poorest countries. The region already has a shortage of more than 1 million professional healthcare workers, the report says, and is losing an additional 20,000 each year through emigration.

Nonetheless, more than 810,000 people in the region are receiving the drugs, about 17% of those in need.

East, South and Southeast Asia also showed significant gains, nearly tripling the number of people receiving drugs over 2003-05. Thailand, which is manufacturing generic forms of some AIDS drugs, "was a major driver of this increase," according to the report.

Latin America and the Caribbean nations are also doing well, with 68% of those in need, about 315,000 people, receiving the drugs. Thirteen countries in the region provide treatment to more than half their population in need.

The regions with the least access to antiretroviral drug treatment are Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with just 21,000 receiving treatment, and the Middle East and North Africa, with 4,000 getting drugs.

None of those countries has a major AIDS problem yet, the report says.

*SOURCE: Yahoo News*

# Energy Drinks and Alcohol

---

*Continued from page 1*

mix might be due to the ingredients in the drink. Red Bull contains caffeine plus taurine, an amino acid that plays a significant role in brain and retinal development and may enhance the effects of caffeine. The drink also includes glucuronolactone, which is supposed to stimulate the basal metabolic rate.

"Popular reports suggest that the use of energy drinks might reduce the intensity of the depressant effects of alcohol," said lead researcher Maria Lucia O. Souza-Formigoni, an associate professor and psychobiologist. "However, there was little scientific evidence to support this hypothesis."

In their study, Souza-Formigoni's team assigned 26 young, healthy volunteers to two groups that received 0.6 or 1.0 g/kg of alcohol (vodka) respectively. All the volunteers completed three experimental sessions. These included alcohol alone,

**"People should be warned that in spite of the sensation of reduced effects, they are still affected by alcohol, and their motor coordination is impaired."  
-Souza-Formigoni**

Red Bull alone or alcohol plus the energy drink.

Alcohol alone produced higher levels of weakness, difficulty in walking and increase of muscular tension, Souza-Formigoni said. Alcohol plus Red Bull prevented the sensation of headache induced by alcohol, but like alcohol, it also caused sensations of fatigue, dizziness and weakness, as well as altered sight, walk, hearing and speech when compared to the ingestion of energy drink alone, she added.

In addition, the sensation of general well-being was smaller after mixing alcohol and Red Bull than with alcohol alone.

"The ingestion of one dose of energy drink was not enough to significantly reduce most of the objectively measured effects of alcohol in tests of motor coordination and reaction time, nor to reduce the breath-alcohol concentration," Souza-Formigoni said.

*Continued on page 4, see Energy Drinks and Alcohol*

# New Type of AIDS Drugs

---

*Continued from page 2*

The drug was meant to be an improved version of Fuzeon, or T-20, an injectable protein that prevents HIV from infecting healthy cells. Holmes had tried T-20, and it didn't work for him. But the experimental drug -- in combination with three other pills -- revived him. He gained 40 pounds. His CD4 count has stayed stable at 250 -- about one-third of normal, but sufficient to ward off infections.

Two years ago, however, drugmaker Trimeris Inc. abandoned the experimental medicine, citing problems in its formulation. Holmes said that although he continues to take the drug, supplies of it are running out. "There are only about five or six of us in the world still taking it," he said.

While he remains reasonably healthy today, Holmes desperately needs to find a substitute for the experimental drug he credits with saving his life. "I am hoping to get into the integrase study," he said.

San Francisco AIDS physicians are eager to see the new drugs. "I've got a waiting list of patients in the Bay Area who are running out of time," said UCSF professor Dr. Jay Lalezari, director of Quest Clinical Research, which conducts new drug trials.

Although he believes the Merck drug may hold the most promise, he said there are also encouraging studies under way

of other drugs, including an experimental drug from Pfizer that blocks HIV from latching onto blood cells.

Johnson & Johnson subsidiary Tibotec has developed a new generation of drugs that have shown promising results in clinical trials by attacking the protease and reverse transcriptase enzymes -- the target of most successful AIDS drugs today.

Dr. Marcus Conant, who has been treating AIDS patients in San Francisco since the first days of the epidemic, said what is really needed for those failing on multidrug therapies today is two or three new drugs, to be started as substitutes at the same time.

Otherwise, each new drug that is introduced can be quickly overwhelmed by the virus, as if it were a single drug taken alone. Doctors learned years ago that AIDS monotherapy -- taking a single drug - is a surefire way to breed resistant viruses. But thousands of AIDS patients, who find they are running out of options with their existing mixes of drugs, have little choice but to take the next new medicine coming out of the labs. Conant calls the phenomenon "serial monotherapy," an unlikely strategy to restore health.

*SOURCE: SF Chronicle  
By: Sabin Russell*



California Drug Counseling  
11751 Davis Street  
Moreno Valley, CA 92555

Phone: (951) 243-5129  
Fax: (951) 485-2642

*California Drug Counseling education and counseling center provides a variety of services including behavior modification, HIV/AIDS prevention and Medical drug/alcohol counseling, Prop 36 counseling, tutoring, mentoring, sex education counseling, parenting and other counseling services.*

*The office is located at  
659 & 671 E Walnut Street  
Pasadena, CA 91101  
(626)844-0410  
Fax (626)844-3135*

*The Fresh Start office provides  
placement counseling and job  
assistance for ex-offenders.*

*The Fresh Start office is  
located at  
4344 Latham St. Suite #220  
Riverside, CA 92501  
(951) 781-0655*

## Energy Drinks and Alcohol

*Continued from page 3*

She added, however, that participants did experience "a reduction in the subjective sensation of intoxication."

In other words, the combination of Red Bull and alcohol doesn't reduce the effects of alcohol -- it only makes you think it does.

"People should be warned that in spite of the sensation of reduced effects, they are still affected by alcohol, and their motor coordination is impaired," Souza-Formigoni said. "They shouldn't drive or do any activity for which motor coordination is required."

The makers of Red Bull don't recommend mixing the product with alcohol. "Red Bull is a nonalcoholic energy drink that vitalizes body and mind. It improves performance and reaction time in moments of

need," said Red Bull spokeswoman Patrice Radden. "Alcohol makes you tired, and therefore can impair the positive functional effects of Red Bull. This is why we do not promote Red Bull to be mixed with alcohol."

Katz agreed, and said he remains skeptical as to whether drinks like Red Bull can enhance performance in any situation. "But one thing is perfectly clear, they are no substitute for a designated driver," he said.

"The public health community, along with the makers and distributors of energy drinks, will need to spread the message that impairment from alcohol may feel different under the influence of an energy drink, but still poses all of the same threats," Katz said.

*SOURCE: HealthDay News  
By: Steven Reinberg*