

PLASTIC SURGERY FOR FREE?

(the V. International Workshop
“**ADVERSE DRUG REACTIONS and LIPODYSTROPHY in HIV**”,
Paris, VII. 2003.)

(Translated from Latvian)

This doctors' gathering has also invited treatment activists.
Here are some conclusions from what was heard and read.

With HIV- infection, **loss of fat** is more often observed in the white race, in slim people and in those with a lower CD4 count (abstract #78).

Usually PIs are considered as **lipodystrophy** cause.
Still, other authors are attributing lipodystrophy to patients' age, duration of therapy and use of d4T (Zerit, stavudine), not PIs (#100).
Replacing PIs with NNAs does not make any improvement in what lipodystrophy has caused to the body. Instead, it can even worsen lipoatrophy in limbs (#83).

In her speech, the AIDS medicine authority from Paris Dr Katlama stressed that **STIs** in no way improve the well- being of patients, suffering from lipodystrophy. Still, there were arguments against her standpoint. E.g., some researchers (#88) concluded that an interruption for at least 6 months has positively changed the body composition of patients with a good control over their HIV infection. So the question is still open.

In future, **Nelfinavir (Viracept)** users in Latvia will eventually have access to one 625 mg tablet (twice daily), which reaches a better plasma concentration and is more bio- available (#116).

Atazanavir - the new ARV for patients not responding any more to previous combinations, seems promising also in regards to lipodystrophy (#64).

Therapy- naïve patients who started with **ddl** (Videx, didanosine) / **stavudine** combination have shown a bigger subcutaneous fat loss compared to those on abacavir (Ziagen) / lamivudine first- line (#13).

Patients suffering from lipoatrophy gained body fat by replacing d4T (Zerit, stavudine) with **abacavir** (Ziagen) or **AZT** (Retrovir, zidovudine) (#90).

The same, lipoatrophy diminished in patients who switched from **d4T** (Zerit, stavudine) or AZT (Retrovir, zidovudine) to **abacavir** (Ziagen) (#14).

Posters on different methods dealing with facial lipoatrophy raised the biggest interest. While the photos seemed promising, surgery is expensive and the effect may not be lasting.

There are other evidences, too: Italian **plastic surgeons** told these operations on HIV- positive Italians are free of charge!

And how about Latvia?...

A.Kalnins,
AGIHAS