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There is NO existence of a new strain of HIV in Cuba, confirmed IPK specialist

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An extensive article published by *Cubadebate* today confirmed that there is no existence of a new strain of HIV in Cuba as international media voiced weeks ago. However, it does exist a significant association between the CRF-19 recombinant and a rapid progression to AIDS.

Unprotected intercourse between two people living with HIV, carrier each of different subtypes of HIV (A, B, C, D...or the combination of some), is the genesis of the Circulating Recombinant Forms (CRF) associated to HIV, highlights the news website.

One of those is the CRF-19 and it has caused stir lately, especially after the **EBioMedicine** journal released the results of a research conducted by scientists from the University of Liege and the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium, and the Institute of Tropical Medicine Pedro Kouri (IPK), Cuba.

The truth is that after a clinical observation, some patients attended at the IPK had a significant rate of growth in their viral load. Simultaneously, the number of defense cells (CD4) dropped shortly after the HIV was diagnosed. These patients had the CRF-19 virus, discovered in Cuba in 1997. The new thing here is the rapid progression of the CRF-19.

This viral strain represents the 17%-20% of the subtypes of the circulating pathogen in Cuba, also found in Cameroon.

The Doctor in Science Vivian Kourí (in the picture), from the Virology Department and author of

the research, argues that the presence of a high viral load, peculiar in this sort of HIV strain, explains the rapid progression to AIDS described and associated to CRF19. Besides, she detailed that this HIV strain replication is much more efficient than others observed in other strains of the pathogen.

**Cubasi Translation Staff**

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