

Intriguing viral link to intestinal cancer in mice

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More than 50% of adults in the United States test positive for human cytomegalovirus (HCMV) infection.

For most people, infection produces no symptoms and results in the [virus](#) persisting in the body for a long time. HCMV infects many cell types in the body including the [cells](#) that line the intestines (IECs).

New research, led by Sergio Lira, at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York, shows that mice engineered to express the HCMV [protein](#) US28 in IECs develop intestinal tumors as they age. These mice also develop more tumors than normal mice in a model of inflammation-induced intestinal tumors.

The authors therefore suggest that it is possible that HCMV infection could help promote intestinal cancer in humans, although they caution that much more work is needed if such an association is to be confirmed.

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