Hep B Vaccine Works Poorly in Those With Rheumatoid Arthritis

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The vaccine for hepatitis B virus (HBV) is nearly ineffective among people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Researchers vaccinated people with and without RA with the three-shot HBVAXPRO-10 vaccine according to the standard protocol. They presented their findings at the European League Against Rheumatism Annual Congress in Rome, Italy.

The researchers tested for indicators of an immune response to hep B after 28 weeks. Eleven percent of the RA participants responded to the vaccine, compared with 83 percent of those without RA. People with RA were 44 times more likely to have a non-response than those without the condition.

“People with RA have an increased risk of morbidity and mortality from infections, and to discover that immunization might not confer protection is a real concern,” study investigator Misha Tilanus, a medical student at the Radboud University Medical Centre in Nijmegen, Netherlands, said in a press release. “It’s crucial that patients and health care practitioners are aware of this lack of efficacy and do all they can to minimize risk.”

To read the release, click here.

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