Hep C Hospital Admissions Spike Fivefold; Those for HIV Drop by Half

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Rates of hospital admissions for people living with the hepatitis C virus (HCV) increased fivefold during a 15-year period, while those for people with HIV have dropped nearly 50 percent during the same span, according to a study described at the IDWeek 2012 meeting in San Diego and reported by MedPage Today. Meanwhile, hospital admission rates for people coinfected with both HIV and hepatitis C slightly more than doubled.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill study, whose findings are still preliminary and not yet peer-reviewed, examined the annual National Hospital Discharge Surveys from 1996 to 2010 and found 6.6 million hospital admissions coded for HCV, HIV or coinfected serostatus. Specifically, 39 percent of admissions were for HIV, 56 percent for hep C and 5 percent for coinfected patients. Because the analysis began at the advent of the antiretroviral era, HIV death rates unsurprisingly dropped, as did the rates for coinfected patients. Hep C death rates may have dropped as well, but according to Christine Oramasionwu, PharmD, PhD, of UNC-CH, this decrease was the “least pronounced.” The study’s findings are limited by the facts that they were based on retroactive observations and that the data lacked any insight into disease severity.

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