Hepatitis on the Block

June 1, 2005

In February, the FDA approved Roche's hepatitis C treatment—Pegasys (peginterferon alfa-2a) plus Copegus (ribavirin USP)—for HIVers coinfected with hep C. Many coinfected folks have been using the combo (with cure rates ranging from 27% to 40% in studies) since its 2002 approval for hep C soloists.

In a small study, Pegasys and methadone didn't interact badly, so dose adjustments aren't necessary if you're taking both. Ribavirin hasn't been similarly tested, but folks hip to hep C think it won't mess with meth, either.

In March, the FDA approved BMS's Baraclude (entecavir) for hep B treatment. The FDA doesn't say the drug is "indicated" for use in HIVers, but the label tells docs how to dose the med for B-bearing HIVers who have previously taken lamivudine (3TC). Baraclude remains to be studied in HIVers who've never taken 3TC.

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