



Curing Hep C Lowers Death Risk

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People coinfectd with HIV and hepatitis C virus (HCV) have a much lower risk of death after ridding themselves of HCV. Researchers followed 3,500 coinfectd Europeans treated for hep C and compared death rates between the 29 percent who were cured (“responders”) and the 45 percent who were not (“non-responders”). (Another 26 percent had an unknown response.)

During the median 3.8 years that the participants were followed in the study, 213 of them (6.1 percent) died. A respective 0.68 percent and 1.23 percent of the responders and non-responders died each year from any cause. After adjusting for various factors, the researchers found that the non-responders had a significantly higher overall risk of death.

Non-responders were 5.3 times more likely to die of liver-related causes than responders. Among responders, 10.8 percent of all deaths were liver-related, compared with 35.4 percent of the deaths among non-responders. After adjusting for various factors, the researchers found that non-responders still had a 4.5-fold higher risk of liver-related death.

“Liver cancer can develop several years after hepatitis C has been cured in people with severe liver damage at the time of hepatitis C treatment,” notes Lars Peters, MD, a senior researcher at the University of Copenhagen’s Rigshospitalet and the study’s lead author. “We didn’t find any cases of liver cancer in our group of [cured] patients, but it would be relevant to follow our patients longer to see if the risk of liver cancer and other liver-related clinical events continue to remain low.”

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