European HIV-Positive Gay Men Cured of Hepatitis C Are Reinfected at Very High Rate

April 19, 2016

Western European men who have sex with men (MSM) who have HIV and are cured of hepatitis C virus are reinfected with HCV at a very high rate and sometimes recontract the virus multiple times. Researchers conducted a retrospective cohort analysis of hep C reinfections in the European AIDS Treatment Network (NEAT), looking at centers in Germany, France and the United Kingdom.

Findings were presented at the 51st International Liver Congress in Barcelona.

There is a well-documented, growing epidemic of sexually transmitted HCV among HIV-positive MSM in Western Europe, the United States and Australia.

Of 606 people in the NEAT cohort who were cured of hep C, 24.6 percent (149 men) were reinfected within three years. Twenty-nine men were reinfected a second time, four were reinfected a third time and one person experienced a fourth reinfection.

Overall, the reinfection rate among those cured of hep C was 7.6 percent per year. The reinfection rate was higher among those who were treated for the virus, at 8.4 percent per year, than among those who spontaneously cleared their hep C, at 4.6 percent per year. Those who spontaneously cleared a hep C reinfection were 45 percent less likely to be reinfected than those who cured their hep C through treatment.

The reinfection rate was highest in Paris, at 21.8 percent per year, and lowest in Hamburg, at 5.04 percent per year.

The second-reinfection rate was 19.9 percent per year.

The researchers urged prevention strategies to prevent reinfections with hep C among this population, including semiannual or quarterly screenings for the virus among those with a prior infection.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.