Hep C Cure Rates are the Same for Those With HIV

June 25, 2014 By Benjamin Ryan

Treatment for hepatitis C virus (HCV) is in the midst of a stunning revolution. With the release of Gilead Sciences' Sovaldi (sofosbuvir) and Janssen's Olysio (simeprevir) in late 2013, cure rates have jumped while treatment times have fallen. Plus, the onerous injectable drug interferon is on its way out. By year's end, the likely arrival of new crops of combination therapies from Gilead, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Janssen and AbbVie will make hep C curable nearly 100 percent of the time in many cases, while also lowering treatment times to as little as eight weeks and doing away with interferon for good.

And all this good news holds true even for someone who is coinfected with HIV.

In the past, HIV dragged on hep C treatment success rates. But recent research shows that this is no longer the case with current and forthcoming hepatitis C therapies. Furthermore, Sovaldi, which is the first hep C drug specifically approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in people with HIV, can be safely combined with almost all HIV regimens.

Daniel Fierer, MD, an assistant professor in infectious diseases at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, has a message for those coinfected people who may have disengaged from medical care because of historically depressing news:

"This is the time to get back into [hep C] care, get back to thinking about it," he says. "Bug your doctor about it. Now."

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