# Hep C Treatment Program Cuts Prevalence by Two Thirds in Swiss HIV Cohort

The ongoing cohort of men who have sex with men living with HIV had a hep C prevalence rate of about 5 percent.

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Systematically testing for and treating hepatitis C virus (HCV) among men who have sex with men (MSM) living with HIV can greatly reduce the prevalence of hep C among them, aidsmap reports. This is according to an analysis of such a program instigated among participants of the ongoing Swiss HIV Cohort in the European nation.

The nonrandomized Swiss HCVree trial, which was centered around providing hep C testing, treatment and behavioral counseling to members of the Swiss HIV Cohort, tested all members of the cohort between October 2015 and May 2017 and identified 177 men (4.8 percent of the overall group) with HCV.

Findings were presented at the 16th European AIDS Conference in Milan.

Of the 177 HCV diagnoses, 147 involved those who were diagnosed previously. The remaining 30 men had undiagnosed longer-term infections or contracted the virus recently.

The study provided treatment with 12 or 16 weeks of Zepatier (grazoprevir/elbasvir) with or without ribavirin to all those with genotype 1 or 4 of hep C. A total of 122 of the 177 men diagnosed with hep C took part in this treatment program. Another 11 men had other genotypes of the virus or had reasons they could not receive Zepatier, known as contraindications. The remainder of the HCV-positive men were either lost to follow-up or declined to participate in this study.

All but one of those treated for hep C achieved a sustained virologic response 12 weeks after completing therapy (SVR12, considered a cure). Ultimately, this reduced the prevalence of hep C among the Swiss HIV Cohort by two thirds.

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