Coffee Slows Progression of Hep C Liver Disease

December 13, 2010

People living with chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection and advanced liver disease who drink three or more cups of coffee per day have a 53 percent lower risk of liver disease progression than non-coffee drinkers, according to a new study published in the November issue of Hepatology. According to the paper, authored by Neal Freedman, PhD, MPH, of the National Cancer Institute and his colleagues, patients with hepatitis C–related bridging fibrosis or cirrhosis who did not respond to standard treatment benefited from increased coffee intake.

This study included 766 participants enrolled in the Hepatitis C Antiviral Long-Term Treatment against Cirrhosis (HALT-C) trial who had hepatitis C–related bridging fibrosis or cirrhosis and failed to respond to standard treatment with pegylated interferon and ribavirin. Upon entering the study, HALT-C volunteers were asked to report their typical frequency of coffee intake and portion size over the past year. A similar question was asked for black and green tea intake.

Participants were seen every three months during the 3.8–year study period to assess clinical outcomes that included: ascites (abnormal accumulation of fluid in the abdomen), prognosis of chronic liver disease, death related to liver disease, hepatic encephalopathy (brain and nervous system damage), hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer), spontaneous bacterial peritonitis, variceal hemorrhage and/or increase in fibrosis. Liver biopsies were also taken at 1.5 and 3.5 years to determine the progression of liver disease.

Results showed that participants who drank three or more cups of coffee per day had a relative risk (RR) of 0.47 for reaching one of the clinical outcomes. An RR above 1.00 suggests an increase in the risk of disease progression, whereas an RR below 1.00 suggests a decrease in the risk of disease progression.

Researchers did not observe any association between tea intake and liver disease progression, though tea consumption was low in the study.

“Given the large number of people affected by HCV, it is important to identify modifiable risk factors associated with the progression of liver disease,” Freedman said. “Although we cannot rule out a possible role for other factors that go along with drinking coffee, results from our study suggest that patients with high coffee intake had a lower risk of disease progression.”

Results from this study should not be generalized to healthier populations, the authors cautioned.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/hepatitis-coffee-liver-19572-1220281259