Post-Cure Hep C Reinfection Is Common Among Prisoners

July 22, 2013

Prisoners who achieve a cure for hepatitis C virus (HCV) are at high risk for reinfection, especially if they continue to inject drugs on the inside. Reporting their findings in the journal Hepatology, researchers studied 119 prisoners who had achieved a sustained virologic response (SVR, considered a cure) following treatment for hep C.

The study population was 98 percent male, with a median age of 33, and 81 percent of them had a history of injection drug use (IDU). Following a median follow-up period of 1.4 years, nine of the participants were reinfected with hep C, with seven of them switching virus genotypes, for an overall reinfection rate of 5.27 cases per 100 person-years. The incidence of reinfection was 12.47 times higher among those actively using drugs compared with those not using post-treatment, 9.95 times higher among those coinfected with HIV compared with HIV-negative participants, and 7.47 times higher among those engaging in more than one risk behavior following treatment compared with those engaging in either one or no risk behaviors.

The investigators stresssed that “preventative interventions at diagnosis and during and after HCV treatment should be strongly reinforced.”

To read the study abstract, click here.

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