



HEPATITIS FOUNDATION
INTERNATIONAL

2009 WEB NEWS ARCHIVE

Impact of Lifestyles on Hepatitis C

In HCV-infected patients, the top three predictors of liver related mortality were having higher body mass index (BMI), presence of insulin resistance (IR), and elevated serum cholesterol. Overall mortality in HCV patients was most linked to metabolic syndrome, higher BMI and hypertension.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/04/090422103558.htm>

Telaprevir Effective in Treating Previously Failed Response

Vertex's telaprevir, an experimental drug for hepatitis C, is showing that it can cure about half of the patients who failed to respond to standard treatments. The study found that 51 percent of patients who took telaprevir in combination with standard drugs for six months were cured and 52 percent were cured.

<http://www.xconomy.com/boston/2009/04/25/vertexs-telaprevir-passes-test-in-tough-to-treat-hepatitis-c-patients/>

FDA Approves Use Test for HIV, Hepatitis B Virus and Hepatitis C Virus

Roche has announced that the United States Food & Drug Administration (FDA) approved an additional intended use for its licensed nucleic acid test, , called the cobas® TaqScreen MPX Test for the simultaneous, direct detection of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV-1 Group M RNA, HIV-1 Group O RNA , HIV-2 RNA), hepatitis C virus RNA and hepatitis B virus DNA in human plasma. Many countries have implemented Nucleic Acid Technology (NAT) testing in order to further ensure the safety of blood and blood products. NAT testing can detect HIV-1 and HCV in the early stages of infection, reducing the risk of transfusion-transmitted HIV-1 and HCV infections to negligible levels. The importance of hepatitis B virus in transfusion-transmitted diseases is increasingly being recognized and NAT screening for HBV is being implemented in some countries.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/fda-approves-use-of-roche-test-to-screen-source-plasma-for-hiv-hepatitis-b-virus-and-hepatitis-c-virus-78303537.html>

Hepatitis Legislation

The Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C bills have been combined in a bipartisan bill – Viral Hepatitis and Liver Cancer Control and Prevention Act 2009 (HR 3974) and introduced in Congress by U.S. Representative Mike Honda (D-CA) and Charles Dent (R-PA) on October 29. This bill will expand education for patients and health care providers, increase access to hepatitis testing and liver cancer screening, improve the capacity of health departments and support viral hepatitis prevention and education program across the nation. [Click here to read the bill.](#)

The Institute of Medicine Report Released:

"Hepatitis and Liver Cancer – A National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Hepatitis B and C." A summary of the report is available at: [viral hepatitis project website](#).

Sharing Insulin Pens a NO NO.

Individuals may be exposed to blood-borne pathogens that could cause diseases like hepatitis and HIV as a result of sharing insulin pens and insulin cartridges, which are only meant for single-patient use. Although insulin pens may contain enough insulin for several rounds of injection by self administration, the FDA has issued a health alert warning against the sharing of devices, as they are only approved for use with one patient per device. Even if the needles are changed between patients, it is not safe to share the insulin pens or insulin cartridges. Blood-borne pathogens, such as HIV and the hepatitis viruses may contaminate the reservoir after the injection, before the needle is changed.

HBV Mutations May Predict Liver Cancer Risk

A recent report published by the Journal of the National Cancer Institute states that certain mutations in the DNA of the hepatitis B virus are associated with the development of liver cancer and may be able to help determine which HBV patients are at increased risk. The study, conducted by Guangwen Cao, M.D., Ph.D. of the Second Military Medical University in Shanghai, found that certain mutations were associated with the development of hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), the most common form of liver cancer and these mutations were more prevalent as chronic HBV infection progressed from an asymptomatic state to liver cirrhosis or HCC. Frequent examinations of chronically infected HBV patients for these mutations could be useful for identifying patients who may require preventive antiviral treatment and for the prediction of HCC.

Medical Students Regularly Stuck by Needles, Often Fail to Report Injuries

Most of the needlesticks among medical students were self-inflicted and occurred in the operating room when the student felt rushed. Unfortunately, many are not reported. Needlestick injuries in surgery can infect patients since the providers' blood can enter the patient's wound. Hospitals need to create a culture of reporting exposures. Medical students are at significant risk of personal injury during clinical training, more needs to be done to educate them about the importance of reporting any needlesticks, the value of post-exposure treatment and on how to prevent future injuries. At the Johns Hopkins Hospital, after an occupational blood exposure occurs, a rapid response team is activated to deliver appropriate care while preserving confidentiality.

[Http://www.infectioncontrolday.com/hotnews/medical-students-and-needlesticks.html](http://www.infectioncontrolday.com/hotnews/medical-students-and-needlesticks.html)

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BioWatch: HGS seeks OK for hepatitis C treatment

Human Genome Sciences has applied for federal regulatory approval to market its drug treatment for hepatitis C, Zalbin. HGS reported positive results from two phase 3 clinical trials that showed Zalbin works as well as Roche's Pegasys treatment for chronic hepatitis C with only half the injections administered. Rates of side effects were also comparable, according to HGS. The two studies treated a total of 2,255 patients. The drug is made by genetically fusing human albumin, the body's most prevalent blood protein, with interferon alfa, using HGS's proprietary technology.

http://www.gazette.net/stories/11272009/businew163311_32526.shtml

Targeted Therapy Extends Survival for Liver Cancer

Primary liver cell cancer is increasing in the U.S. Recent data suggest that the incidence rate has risen to approximately 5 per 100,000 but the five-year survival remains suboptimal with 8% overall survival in the United States. Thus there is a clear unmet need for more effective therapies. Targeted therapy applies designed inhibitors to target critical molecular pathways that often inhibit tumor progression but may not induce tumor progression. Therefore, time to progression and overall survival are the most valid endpoints for assessing response.

The last decades of research into the molecular mechanisms of human malignancy have brought forward new age of targeted therapy. Key proteins crucial for the cell growth and survival of malignant cells are targeted directly with rationally designed inhibitors hopefully resulting in specific antitumor effects. Only Sorafenib, a multikinase inhibitor, has been shown to demonstrate efficacy in extending survival for patients with hepatocellular carcinoma for a limited time, and is FDA approved.

A variety of combinations of these agents hold the promise of enhancing therapeutic efficacy for the treatment of HCC. It is incumbent upon hepatologists to become familiar with these targeted therapies to become familiar with these targeted therapies as they begin to diagnose and treat patients in their clinical practices.

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) progresses more rapidly after liver transplantation in African-Americans

www.reuters.com

Previous studies have shown that hepatitis C virus (HCV) progresses slower prior to liver transplantation in African Americans than in whites. However, the opposite is true after transplantation, in that recurrent HCV in the transplanted liver progresses faster in African Americans than in whites. The researchers found, based on an analysis of liver biopsies performed after transplantation, that African Americans had more severe fibrosis progression and inflammation compared to whites following liver transplantation for HCV. While Hispanics demonstrated similar disease progression after liver

transplantation as whites, African Americans more often experienced graft failure and required repeat liver transplantation compared to whites.

Twice Daily Oral Medications Shows Promise in Hepatitis C

www.reuters.com

Researchers treated patients - both treatment naive and experienced patients - with a twice daily oral combination therapy of a nucleoside polymerase and protease inhibitor. The results were significant antiviral potency and sustained viral reductions. In addition, the therapy appeared safe and well-tolerated. The expected better tolerability of these IFN-free combination DAA regimens may make treatment easier for patients and also allow for patients to be treated who are unable to take interferon based therapy.

Viral Load Predicts Outcome of Liver Transplant Recipients with HCV

<http://www.docguide.com>

Viral load is an important factor and can predict the outcome of patients with hepatitis C virus (HCV) after liver transplantation, for both the development of the different types of recurrent HCV and patient survival. After liver transplant, recurrent HCV infection leads to graft loss and re-transplantation for 10% to 20% of liver transplant recipients. Donor, recipient, and viral parameters are the risk factors associated with HCV recurrence. The study included data from 129 patients who received liver transplants due to HCV cirrhosis between 1980 and 2006 at the Medical University of Innsbruck and, who survived more than 6 months, and had histological proven recurrent HCV infection.

Survival Lower in HCV-Infected Women after Liver Transplant

www.medpagetoday.com

Women undergoing liver transplant as a result of hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection show poorer long-term survival rates and more frequent failure of the donor liver, compared with male recipients. Suggested several potential explanations for the higher risks that women appeared to run:

- Differential effects of aging in women compared with men
- Gender mismatch between donors and recipients -- more common with female versus male recipients in the study
- Renal impairment prior to transplant, also more likely to occur with women than men in the sample.

New Biomarker Predicts Response to Hepatitis C Treatment

Researchers at Duke University Medical Center have identified the first genetic marker that predicts response to hepatitis C treatments, and a single letter of DNA code appears to make a huge difference. Scientists say the biomarker not only predicts who is most likely to respond to treatment and who isn't, but also may explain why there are such different response rates among racial and ethnic groups. According to researcher David Goldstein, they found having a favorable genotype made a significant difference in treatment response across all populations in the study. But because it occurs most often in whites of European ancestry, it helps to explain why blacks fare less well on standard treatments. Goldstein states,

“This discovery enables us to give patients valuable information that will help them and their doctors decide what is best for them. This is what personalized medicine is all about.”

Goldstein also said that patients who are poor responders to standard treatments who have no liver damage might want to wait for the arrival of a new class of drugs called protease inhibitors.

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HFI's Wellness Approach Included In CDC's 2008 Top Five Evidence-Based Prevention Interventions.

"Study to Reduce Intravenous Exposure" (STRIVE) was among the top five Evidence- Based HIV Prevention Interventions identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2008.

[Click here for release.](#)

CDC Study: Failures to Follow Infection Practices Placed More Than 60,000 Patients at Risk for Hepatitis B and C

In the last decade, more than 60,000 patients in the United States were asked to get tested for hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) because health care personnel in settings outside hospitals failed to follow basic infection control practices, according to a new study done by the CDC.

[Click here for the full press release.](#)

Hep A Vaccine Recommended for Parents Adopting Children

U.S. citizens who expect to have close contact with an adopted child from countries with high rates of hepatitis A should be immunized if they have not been already, U.S. immunization advisers said on Wednesday.

[Click here for more information.](#)

New Treatment Option for Unresectable Liver Cancer

Nexavar is an oral multiple kinase inhibitor for the treatment of patients with unresectable hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), the most common form of liver cancer, and patients with advanced renal cell carcinoma (RCC), the most common type of kidney cancer. Until now, patients with unresectable HCC have had limited treatment options. Now, Nexavar offers a new treatment option with proven clinical benefits for unresectable HCC. Nexavar provides the latest information for the treatment of patients with unresectable HCC and patients with advanced RCC. It also provides links to comprehensive support programs to help patients with unresectable HCC or advanced RCC manage their therapy.

Changing Ailing Healthcare System

Changing our ailing healthcare system includes promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors. A Huge task at best. The Hepatitis Foundation International (HFI) has a "leg up" on promoting healthy lifestyles in collaboration with many private and government agencies. All Americans want to be healthy.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Attention: Men and Pregnant Women Taking Ribavirin Registry Established for Potential Birth Defects

The Registry enrolls pregnant women who have been inadvertently exposed to Ribavirin either directly (6 months before or during pregnancy) or indirectly (through her male sexual partner 6 months before or during pregnancy).

[Click here for more information](#)

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Phase 3 Albureron Trials Show Promising Results

The Phase 3 studies conducted by Human Genome Sciences, Inc, known as ACHIEVE 1 and ACHIEVE 2/3, evaluated albuterol vs. ginterferon alfa-2a, in combination with ribavirin, for use in the treatment of interferon-naive patients with chronic hepatitis C.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Acetaminophen Painkillers to Carry Stronger Risk Warnings

Pain relieving drugs containing Acetaminophen will be required to carry more explicit warning labels about the risk of liver damage and stomach bleeding especially for people who overdose on pain medicines or who drink three or more alcoholic drinks each day.

[Click here for more information.](#)

