Treating Hep B With Baraclude Lowers Liver Cancer Risk

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A study has found that treating hepatitis B virus (HBV) with Baraclude (entecavir) reduces the lifetime risk of developing hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), the most common form of liver cancer, aidsmap reports. The paper was presented at the 64th Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) in Washington, DC.

In the observational cohort study, investigators followed 666 Taiwanese people with chronic hep B and cirrhosis of the liver between 2006 and March 2013. These treatment-naive participants were all taking Baraclude monotherapy. Those coinfected with hep C and those who developed HCC within the first year of treatment were left out of the study.

During a mean follow-up period of 2.6 years, the study participants developed 16 cases of HCC. The researchers compared participants with a historical control group of 621 untreated people with hep B and compensated cirrhosis who had been followed between 1985 and 1995. During a mean follow-up period of 8.5 years, this group had 141 cases of HCC.

During the first three years of follow-up, 16 participants (2.4 percent) in the Baraclude group and 32 (5.2 percent) in the treatment-naive group developed HCC. Consequently, the respective incidence rates were 9.19 and 14.19 per 1,000 person years. However, this difference was not quite statistically significant, meaning it could have occurred by chance. Nonetheless, the lifetime risk for HCC was 59 percent lower for those receiving treatment than for those who did not.

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