



# History of Alcohol Use Doesn't Affect Hep C Cure Chances

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A history of heavy alcohol consumption doesn't reduce the effectiveness of hepatitis C virus (HCV) treatment, according to a new study published in the October issue of *Hepatology*. These findings are encouraging, in light of previous suggestions that sustained virologic responses (SVRs), or viral cures, after therapy may be less likely in those with significant drinking histories.

According to the study of 421 people living with HCV starting treatment for the first time—259 of whom provided the researchers with detailed drinking histories—93 percent reported regular drinking before their HCV diagnosis and 31 percent continued drinking regularly after their diagnosis; nearly 2 percent continued drinking during HCV treatment and roughly 12 percent either continued or resumed treatment after therapy ended. Of those who drank prior to starting HCV treatment, 68 percent drank heavily and nearly 30 percent didn't abstain from alcohol for the recommended six months before beginning therapy.

Despite these reports of regular and sometimes heavy drinking, SVRs occurred in 80.2 percent of patients with HCV genotypes 2 or 3 and 45.1 percent of patients with genotypes 1, 4 or 6—cure rates similar to those seen in other studies.

Pretreatment drinking patterns and total alcohol intake were both unrelated to SVR rates. Abstaining less than six months before treatment was related to lower SVR rates in moderate, but not heavy, drinkers. Additionally, HCV rebounds following treatment completion proved unrelated to a return to drinking after pegylated interferon and ribavirin therapy was discontinued.

"The amount of alcohol consumed before HCV treatment did not have a negative effect on treatment outcomes in our population," the researchers concluded. "A history of heavy drinking should not be considered a deterrent to HCV treatment in members of an integrated health care plan who are closely."

To read the *Hepatology* report (paid subscription required), [click here](#).

