



Hepatitis C Stigma Can Be Severe

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 Half of people with hepatitis B or C viruses (HBV/HCV) report experiencing discrimination, and one in four say family members have skirted physical contact because of their infection. Researchers conducted an online survey of 1,217 HCV- or HBV-positive people in Europe and the United States and presented their findings at the 50th International Liver Congress in Vienna, Austria.

Fifty percent of the respondents reported suffering discrimination in some form because of having viral hepatitis. Out of the 94 percent who had disclosed their HBV or HCV status to family members, 25 percent of them said family then avoided physical contact. Of the 74 percent who told friends about having viral hepatitis, 47 percent experienced discrimination and 24 percent were shunned from social events.

Out of the 58 percent who told their romantic partner they had viral hepatitis, one-third said it affected their relationship and 43 percent said the disclosure impacted their sex life.

Forty-six percent said they had disclosed their condition at work. Out of this group, one in 10 lost their jobs. Fifty-six percent said this disclosure affected their self-image, with 41 percent feeling ashamed of their HBV or HCV status.

Seventy percent of health care providers apparently cared for the respondents properly, while 25 percent maintained a distance and 7 percent refused to care for the individuals.

To read a press release about the study, [click here](#).