CDC Call to Test All Boomers for Hep C Has Fallen Flat

Efforts to test the highest-risk cohort and get those who test positive into care and treatment for the virus have been woefully inadequate.

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Efforts in the United States to test baby boomers for hepatitis C virus (HCV) and get those who test positive into care and treatment for the virus have been woefully inadequate, aidsmap reports.

Those born between 1945 and 1965 have the highest rate of hep C in the nation, a fact that prompted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to issue guidelines to health care providers to test everyone in this age group for the virus.

Three presentations at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) in Boston showed the anemic results of that directive as well as of the efforts to cure hep C on a grand scale.

At one Atlanta hospital, only 10 percent of those diagnosed with hep C during routine baby boomer testing between 2012 and 2014 have been cured of the virus. The lion's share of those diagnosed with hep C made no more than one clinic visit after their diagnosis before dropping out of care.

In outpatient and primary care settings in Chicago, only 15 percent of baby boomer patients were tested for hep C during a one-month period.

Finally, researchers conducted a study of hep C testing in New York state and found that while a 2014 law mandating testing of the virus among baby boomers increased the testing rate dramatically, only 6.6 percent of those in the target population were tested that year. Just one third of those who tested positive for hep C antibodies were then tested for the virus's genetic material—a positive test confirms chronic HCV infection—and received a viral genotype test.

To read the aidsmap article, click here.

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