Those With Cirrhosis, HIV and Hep B or C Aren't Screening for Liver Cancer Enough

European and U.S. guidelines recommend that all those with cirrhosis undergo biannual screening for liver cancer.

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Europeans living with cirrhosis and HIV who also have coinfection with hepatitis B or C viruses (HBV or HCV) or both forms of viral hepatitis adhere to the recommended frequency of liver cancer screening at a troublingly low rate, aidsmap reports.

European and American guidelines recommend that all adults with cirrhosis should receive ultrasound scans for hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC, the most common form of liver cancer) every six months.

Previous research conducted in the United States has found that 13% to 51% of people who have only HBV or HCV are screened for liver cancer every six months.

Publishing their findings in the Journal of Viral Hepatitis, researchers analyzed pooled data spanning 2005 to 2015 from the Collaboration of Observational HIV Epidemiological Research in Europe (COHERE). The analysis looked at 646 people with HIV from the Netherlands, France, Austria and Italy.

Thirteen percent of the cohort was coinfected with HBV, 80% with HCV and 7% with both HBV and HCV. They had received their cirrhosis diagnosis a median of five years prior. Ninety-three percent were taking antiretrovirals.

In 2005, 5.4% of the cohort was screened for liver cancer every six months, as were 18.4% in 2008 and 14.2% in 2014. The proportion during each time point who had screened for liver cancer during the previous 12 months was 7%, 26% and 30%, respectively.

Factors associated with higher adherence to the six-month screening guidelines included making more frequent clinic visits and, to a moderate extent, having been diagnosed with cirrhosis for longer.

To read the aidsmap article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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