Hep C Cure Yields Benefits for Those With Cirrhosis

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People with cirrhosis who are cured of hepatitis C virus (HCV) have significantly lowered risk of liver decompensation (advanced scarring), liver cancer and death. Publishing their findings in Clinical Infectious Diseases, investigators studied 351 participants who had cirrhosis of the liver related to hep C. Of those who were treated, 110 achieved a sustained virologic response (SVR, considered a cure), 193 failed to achieve an SVR, and the remaining 48 participants were not treated. The study began in 2001, and the participants were followed for a mean of 5.3 years.

The six participants who achieved an SVR and developed hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), the most common form of liver cancer, did so a respective 0.04, 0.64, 2.4, 7.4, 7.4 and 7.6 years after being cured of hep C. For those who achieved an SVR, the respective incidences of either HCC, liver complications, liver-related death and death for any reason was 1.0, 0.9, 0.7 and 1.9 per 100 person years. By comparison, the respective incidences were 2.3, 3.2, 3.0 and 4.1 for those who did not achieve an SVR and 4.0, 4.9, 4.5 and 5.1 among the untreated participants.

These trends held relatively steady in the time after three years of follow-up, as compared with the first three years of follow-up.

The study authors concluded that while there is a markedly reduced risk for HCC, liver decompensation and death for those with cirrhosis who are cured of hep C, there is still a long-term risk of developing HCC for up to eight years. Therefore, people in this circumstance should maintain liver cancer surveillance for the long-term.

To read the abstract, click here.

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