Curing Hep C Linked to Increased Liver Cancer Survival

This finding concerns liver cancer diagnosed after being cured of hepatitis C.

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People with hepatitis C virus (HCV) who are cured of the virus and then are diagnosed with hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC, the most common form of liver cancer) have a higher cancer survival rate than their counterparts who are not cured of HCV, Healio reports.

Hansen Dang, of Stanford University Medical Center, and colleagues conducted a retrospective global analysis of data regarding 1,676 people with HCV from the United States, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan between 2005 and 2017. They published their findings in the journal Hepatology.

A total of 437 people were treated with interferon-free direct-acting antiviral regimens and cured of HCV, while 1,239 people remained untreated for the virus. All the cohort members were diagnosed with liver cancer, with those who were cured of hep C receiving the cancer diagnosis after their viral cure. All received treatment for liver cancer, either curative or palliative.

The annual rate of death among those who were untreated for HCV was 7.7%, compared with 2.4% among the cured group. The liver-related death rate in each group was 7.7% and 1.5%, respectively. The median survival was 26.1 months in the untreated group and 44.3 months in the cured group. Among those who received palliative care, which is intended to relieve pain and other symptoms but not combat cancer, the median survival was 19.7 and 27.4 months, respectively.

After five years of follow-up, 66.1% of those who were not treated for HCV were still alive, compared with 87.8% of those who were cured of the virus.

After adjusting the data to account for various differences between the cohort members, the study authors found that curing HCV was associated with a 63% lower risk of death from any cause and a 66% lower risk of liver-related death.

A recent study of U.S. veterans reached a similar conclusion about the association between successful HCV treatment and improved liver cancer survival.

To read the Healio article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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