Curing Hep C Lowers Death Risk

This is according to an analysis of nearly 5,000 Italians recently treated for the virus.

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Curing hepatitis C virus (HCV) with direct-acting antivirals (DAAs) is associated with a lower risk of death from both liver-related and non-liver-related causes.

Italian researchers examined data on nearly 5,000 people in Sicily who were treated for HCV with DAAs and then followed for a median of 65 weeks. Of these, 24% did not have cirrhosis, 68% had compensated cirrhosis (the less severe form of the advanced liver disease) and 9% had decompensated cirrhosis (the more severe form).

More than 90% of the cohort members achieved a sustained virologic response 12 weeks after completing therapy (SVR, considered a cure).

Following treatment, 53 participants (1.1%) died, 23 of them of liver-related causes and 30 of other causes, including cardiovascular disease and sepsis.

Compared with those who were cured of hep C, those who were not cured were 29 times more likely to die of any cause, including 42 times more likely to die of liver-related causes and 15 times more likely to die of other causes. Those with decompensated cirrhosis were 30 times more likely to die of liver-related causes and three times more likely to die of non-liver-related causes than those without this condition.

A higher body mass index and diabetes were each associated with a higher risk of non-liver-related death.

“An interesting finding that deserves further investigation was a reduced risk of cardiovascular mortality for patients achieving SVR,” notes the study’s lead author, Vincenza Calvaruso, MD, PhD, of the University of Palermo in Italy.

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