Curing Hepatitis C Is Tied to Rapid Improvements in Liver Stiffness

This finding applies to those who begin treatment with progressive liver fibrosis, or scarring.

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Those with progressive fibrosis (scarring) of the liver who are cured of hepatitis C virus (HCV) experience improvements in their liver stiffness by the 24-week mark after they complete direct-acting antiviral treatment for the virus, Healio reports.

Publishing their findings in the Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, researchers conducted a study of 210 people who between September 2014 and August 2016 were cured of hep C through treatment with Daklinza (daclatasvir) and the experimental asunaprevir.

The participants were about evenly divided between men and women. Their median age was 71.5 years. They had a median FIB-4 index of 3.36 (a score above 2.25 is a high indication of progressive fibrosis) and a median liver stiffness of 10.2 kilopascals (kPa), according to shear wave elastography testing (a score above 7.2 indicates a higher likelihood of significant fibrosis).

Those participants who started the study with ALT liver enzyme levels of 30 international units per liter (indicating a normal level) or less and a FIB-4 index of 2 or less saw their median liver stiffness decrease from 7 to 6.7 kPa by the time they completed taking Daklinza and asunaprevir (but before they were classified as cured, a pronouncement based on an assessment taken at 12 weeks post–follow-up). This finding, however, bordered on a lack of statistical significance, meaning it possibly could have been driven by chance.

The 75 participants who started the study with ALD levels of 30 or below and a FIB-4 index higher than 2 did see a statistically significant improvement in their liver stiffness between the study's outset and the end of treatment, from 9.6 to 9.2 kPa. These individuals also saw a significant decline in their liver stiffness by the 24-week mark post-treatment, at which point the measure had declined to 7.7 kPa.

To read the Healio article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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