Hep C Takes 15 Years Off Life Span, Raises Death Risk 12-Fold

October 21, 2013

People with hepatitis C virus (HCV) die 15 years earlier and have a 12-times greater risk of death when compared with those without the virus, the National AIDS Treatment Advocacy Project (NATAP) reports. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted a multicohort analysis, examining electronic medical records of adults who received treatment at least once between 2006 and 2010 in four health care systems. The researchers then compared the findings of their so-called Chronic Hepatitis Cohort Study (CHeCS) with the national Multiple Cause of Death (MCOD) study covering the same period of time. They presented their findings at the IDWeek 2013 conference in San Francisco.

Looking at the records of 11,703 people with hep C, who made up a half of a percent of the 2.1 million people in the CHeCS cohort, the investigators found that 1,590 (14 percent) died during the study period. Sixty percent were between 45 and 59 years old, and 34 percent were 60 and older. When compared with the MCOD group, those in CHeCS had a 12-times greater mortality rate. With an average age at death of 59, those in the CHeCS group died an average of 15 years earlier than the typical American.

Hep C, the researchers found, is vastly unreported as a cause of death, registered in only 19 percent of death certificates among those in the cohort who died. Based on this finding, the investigators extrapolated that more than 80,000 Americans who died in 2010 had hep C. They also projected that 53,000 people died as a consequence of hep C in 2010.

To read the NATAP report, click here.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.