New Study Casts Doubt on Link Between Hep C and Diabetes

February 10, 2014

A new research paper has found no link between hepatitis C virus (HCV) and diabetes, contrasting previous findings. Publishing their results in the journal Hepatology, investigators analyzed population-based data from the U.S. National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey on more than 15,000 adults participating in the 1999 to 2010 surveys. Those in the study cohort had data on their diabetes status as well as on hep C antibodies or hep C RNA.

Among the study group, there was a 1.7 percent prevalence of hep C antibodies, 1.1 percent prevalence of hep C RNA, 10.5 percent prevalence of diabetes, and 32.8 percent prevalence of pre-diabetes. Hep C status did not affect the prevalence of diabetes or pre-diabetes. After adjusting for various factors, the researchers found no ultimate connection between diabetes and hep C antibodies or hep C RNA. There was also no link between insulin resistance and hep C.

Previous papers that have found a link between diabetes and hep C have not been based on population-based research, nor have they used standard criteria to establish a diabetes diagnosis, as this study did on both counts. The researchers behind the new study speculate that the supposed link between hep C and diabetes found in the older research may have been a consequence of elevated liver enzymes as opposed to the virus.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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