Hep C Testing Slowly Rising Among Baby Boomers

This birth cohort accounts for the majority of people living with the virus.

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Members of the baby boom generation are increasingly receiving testing for hepatitis C virus (HCV).

Those born between 1945 and 1965 account for the majority of those living with hep C in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently started recommending a one-time test for everyone in this birth cohort, regardless of any other hep C–related risk factors.

Publishing their findings in Clinical Infectious Diseases, researchers analyzed 2013 to 2017 data on 133,602 adults born between 1945 and 1994 who responded to the National Health Interview Survey conducted annually by the National Center for Health Statistics. The survey inquires about hep C testing.

Among baby boomers, reported HCV testing increased from 13.2 percent of respondents in 2013 to 16.8 percent in 2017. Among those born between 1966 and 1994, the testing rate increased from 12.3 percent to 17.3 percent during this time.

The study authors theorized that the rise in testing among non–baby boomers was driven in part by greater awareness of hep C as a result of the opioid epidemic. The CDC recommendation of the one-time HCV test as well as greater awareness of the newer generation of treatments for the virus might have influenced the rising rate among baby boomers.

Those less likely to receive HCV testing included women, people without a high school diploma and those born outside the United States. Insurance type was associated with variations in the testing rate; those with military and public health insurance were more likely to receive testing for the virus.

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