Hep C Testing Could Soon Be Easier

September 5, 2016 By Casey Halter

Currently, testing for hepatitis C virus (HCV) involves two steps: a low-cost antibody test followed by more expensive nucleic acid testing (NAT) for those who test positive for HCV antibodies to confirm a positive result.

This two-step process means that, especially in low- and middle-income countries where hep C is prevalent, many patients do not get tested at all or never follow up after an initial positive result.

But in recent findings published in Annals of Internal Medicine, researchers concluded that several commercially available HCVAg tests (hepatitis C virus core antigen tests) are sensitive and specific enough for those with viral loads of at least 3,000 to be the only test needed for diagnosis and "could replace NAT for HCV detection, particularly if a lower cost per test allows more patients to be served."

Researchers also recommended that these one-step tests be considered for point-of-care testing to increase diagnoses and streamline the HCV continuum of care in order to help achieve the World Health Organization's ambitious goal of eliminating hepatitis B and C by 2030.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/article/hep-c-testing-soon-easier