A Hep C Vax Could Greatly Slow Transmission Among People Who Inject Drugs

This would hold true even if the hepatitis C vaccine did not provide sterilizing immunity.

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Even an imperfect hepatitis C virus (HCV) vaccine could greatly lower the rate of transmission of the virus among people who inject drugs (PWID).

Publishing their findings in Science Translational Medicine, researchers conducted a mathematical modeling study that sought to determine the likelihood of hep C transmission among PWID who share needles and syringes. The study authors based their projections on previously published data from individuals infected or reinfected with HCV.

Research is ongoing into a vaccine for hep C. An approved vaccine is not expected to provide perfect, sterilizing immunity but would likely reduce the amount of hep C in the bloodstream among those who contract the virus.

The model estimated that if a PWID shared syringes or needles with a PWID who had HCV, the chance of transmission of the virus between them within six months would be more than 90 percent. If the uninfected individuals had received a non-sterilizing vaccine, the risk of transmission would drop to between 1 and 25 percent, depending on the type of needle used and other factors.

To read a press release about the study, click here.

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