Hep C Related Costs to Peak at $9B in 2024

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As the baby boomers age, the United States will see a peak and then significant tapering of hep C cases, liver disease and associated health care costs in the next two decades, according to a report published in the journal Hepatology. The study's projections include:

- The prevalence of people with cirrhosis will likely peak in 2015 with 626,500 cases.

- If the number of people treated for hep C is doubled to 126,000 per year through 2030 and the average cure rate increases to 70 percent, by 2030 there will be fewer than 100,000 cases left in the United States. (Current estimate of people with chronic hep C is 2.5 million.)

- Mortality from the disease will increase steadily and peak around 2020.

- In 2011, the U.S. health care cost for hep C was approximately $6.5 billion. This burden should peak in 2024.

Homie Razavi, PhD, of the Center for Disease Analysis in Louisville, Colorado, and the paper's principal investigator, says, "From an eradication perspective, we're looking at it very similar to polio, which is that it can be eliminated in the United States. Complete eradication will be tough, because you have to get other countries involved as well."

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