Key Hep C Markers Predict Rapid Liver Disease Progression

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National Institutes of Health (NIH) researchers have identified several factors in people infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV) that may predict whether rapid progression of disease from initial infection to severe liver disease, according to a paper published July 24 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. According to the study of six people with hepatitis C followed from the time they were infected with HCV in the 1970s, certain genetic characteristics of the virus over time, along with persistently elevated levels of the liver enzyme alanine aminotransferase (ALT) and the chemical messenger monocyte chemotactic protein-1 (MCP-1) during the early years of infection, were predictive of early onset liver fibrosis and cirrhosis. “Now that we know what to look for, we believe it is extremely important to extend our observation to a larger number of patients,” said Patrizia Farci, MD, of the NIH’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in an accompanying news release.

To read the journal article (paid subscription required), click here.
To read the NIH news release, click here.

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