



Interferon, High Blood Pressure May be Risk to Vision

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People living with hepatitis C virus (HCV) and who have high blood pressure should see an eye specialist while undergoing therapy with pegylated interferon-based regimens, concludes an Italian study published in the August issue of *Hepatology*. According to the research, which involved performing ophthalmologic examinations on 97 individuals being treated for HCV, retinopathy—a disease of the retina—was documented in nearly one-third (30.9 percent) of individuals participating in the study. The sight-threatening complication was most common among people with pre-existing eye problems and, notably, among those with high blood pressure. "Retinopathy is frequent during treatment with [pegylated interferon and ribavirin], especially in hypertensive patients, who may develop serious complications," the authors conclude. "Screening for [pegylated interferon]-associated retinopathy should be recommended for HCV patients with hypertension."

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