In My Life

Studies have shown that Latinos are more likely to be living with hep C than the U.S. population as a whole.

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Unfortunately, when it comes to health, Latinos in the United States are often disproportionately affected by many diseases. Factors that contribute to this disparity include language barriers, reluctance to access health care because of immigration status and inadequate health insurance coverage.

An important health concern for Latinos is hepatitis C virus (HCV), which causes inflammation of the liver. Studies have shown that Latinos are more likely to be living with hep C than the U.S. population as a whole. Fortunately, HCV is now much easier to treat and cure than ever before.

As a result, this special issue of Hep is focused on hep C among Latinos. While Latinos may be less likely to acquire HCV than whites, they are about 40% more likely to die from it. Latinos experience more rapid hep C disease progression and are less likely to get timely treatment.

Thankfully, when they do receive HCV treatment with the latest medications, Latinos have a high cure rate. Our cover person, Alejandrina Peña, is a great example. She lived with the virus for decades. She tried many times to get cured but only succeeded with the newest drugs. Click here to read more.

To understand more about hep C among Latinos, we have to start with learning more about the virus and how it affects the liver. Over time, if left untreated, HCV can lead to serious complications, including cirrhosis, liver cancer and the need for a liver transplant. Click here for more HCV basics.

If you are living with hep C—especially if you were previously treated for the virus with older drugs but not cured—you may not be convinced about the latest medications. To help you make that decision, your health care provider will want to conduct a series of tests and ask you questions. Click here to learn more.

All adults should be tested for HCV at least once in your Go to page 6 to read about HCV testing as well as risk factors for the virus. For tips on keeping your liver healthy, regardless of HCV status, click here.

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