Liver Disease Outcomes Among Those With Hep C Differ by Race

However, treating hepatitis C appears to erase these disparities.

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Among people with hepatitis C virus (HCV), Latinos and Asians are more likely than whites to develop hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC, the most common form of liver cancer) or cirrhosis of the liver. This disparity is not seen, however, among those who are cured of the virus.

Publishing their findings in Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics, researchers conducted a cohort study of 8,039 adults with hep C receiving care at two medical centers in California between January 1997 and June 2016.

The study cohort was followed for a cumulative 26,800 years. A total of 58.9 percent were white, 19.7 percent were Latino, 8.5 percent were Black and 12.9 percent were Asian. A total of 97.2 percent of the Asians were born outside of the United States, 54 percent of them in Southeast Asia.

The study group saw 754 new cases of cirrhosis and 394 new cases of liver cancer during follow-up.

After adjusting the data for various factors, the study authors found that compared with being white, being Latino was associated with a 1.37-fold increased likelihood of developing cirrhosis and a 1.47-fold increased likelihood of a liver cancer diagnosis during follow-up. Compared with being white, being Asian was associated with a respective 1.28-fold and 1.29-fold increased likelihood of those two health outcomes, respectively.

There were no such apparent race-based differences in the risk of cirrhosis or liver cancer among those who were cured of hep C.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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