New Hepatitis C Drugs Have Reduced the Need for Liver Transplants

A European liver transplant registry saw a decline in hep C as a cause of needing a transplant.

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Among Europeans, the introduction of highly effective direct-acting antivirals (DAAs) to treat hepatitis C virus (HCV) has reduced the proportion of those receiving a liver transplant as a result of the virus, aidsmap reports.

Researchers analyzed data from the European Liver Transplant Registry. Between January 2007 and June 2017, 36,382 people received a liver transplant as a result of HCV, hepatitis B virus (HBV) or alcoholic or non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH). They broke down the data into two eras: 2007 to 2010, when hep C was treated with interferon, and 2014 to 2017, during which interferon-free DAA treatment became dominant. (During the interim period, DAAs were on the market but commonly used with interferon.)

Findings were presented at the 52nd International Liver Congress in Paris.

While the annual number of liver transplants performed in Europe held steady during the study period, the proportion that were a result of HCV fell from 23 percent in the interferon era to 11 percent in the DAA era. During the DAA era, this proportion dropped from 21 percent in early 2014 to 11 percent in the summer of 2017.

The proportion of those with hep C–related decompensated cirrhosis (the advanced stage of the severe liver disease) who survived for three years after their transplant rose from 65 percent during the interferon era to 77 percent during the DAA era.

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