



# People Cured of Hep C Still Have Elevated Risk of Death

This disparity is driven by heavy drinking or injection drug use, an indication that changing such behaviors may save lives.

September 12, 2016

---

People who are cured of hepatitis C virus (HCV) still have a higher risk of death than the general population. However, this increased risk is driven by heavy alcohol use or injection drug use, which indicates that modifying those behaviors may be particularly beneficial to those who have beaten hep C.

Publishing their findings in the *Journal of Hepatology*, researchers searched a Scottish national database to find all those who achieved a sustained virologic response 12 weeks after completing hep C therapy (SVR12, considered a cure) between 1996 and 2011. They also examined death records in Scotland through December 2013 to determine who among the group of 1,823 people cured of hep C had died and why.

The participants were followed for an average of 5.2 years after being cured of hep C. Seventy-eight of them died.

Compared with the general population, the study group had an 86 percent overall greater likelihood of dying, as well as a 23.5-fold greater likelihood of dying of liver cancer and a 6.58-fold increased likelihood of dying due to drug-related causes. Together, these two causes of death among the hep C-cured group accounted for 66 percent of their excess risk of death.

The researchers found that heavy alcohol use or injection drug use stood out among the modifiable characteristics associated with an increased risk of death among those cured of hep C. The 32.8 percent of the overall hep C-cured population who did not engage in those behaviors had a survival rate comparable to that of the general population.

To read the study abstract, [click here](#).

---