Scientists Map a Hep C Surface Protein, Raising Vaccine Hopes

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Researchers at Rutgers University have identified the structure of a protein on the surface of hepatitis C virus (HCV), a discovery they hope will prove to be a key step in the attempt to develop a vaccine. Publishing their findings in Nature, the researchers describe the structure of one of two surface glycoproteins, known as E2, that the virus uses to bind to human cells.

The researchers were able to determine that a certain part of the structure of E2, which is a target for neutralizing antibodies, resembled that of other class II membrane fusion proteins.

“These results provide unprecedented insights into HCV entry and will assist in developing an HCV vaccine and new inhibitors,” they conclude.

Such knowledge will help the search for a vaccine by guiding researchers in their attempt to manufacture antibodies that can react to hep C’s specific structure and hopefully neutralize the virus.

To read the Rutgers release, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/article/protein-vaccine-25205-629490105