HIV-Positive People in Care Are Infrequently Retested for Hep C

September 24, 2014

While people with HIV are typically tested for hepatitis C virus (HCV) upon entering care, follow-up hep C screens are less common, aidsmap reports. Publishing their findings in Clinical Infectious Diseases, researchers conducted a retrospective study of 70,000 HIV-positive people receiving primary care at seven clinics throughout the United States between 2000 and 2011.

Eighty-five percent of the study sample received hep C testing when entering care. Out of the 9,000 people who did not have the virus and who stayed in care for a year or more, 56 percent were retested for it. Between 35 percent and 79 percent of the cohorts at the respective sites were retested.

Various individual factors were linked to an increased likelihood of testing during the follow-up period, including: reporting condomless anal intercourse, which was linked with a 31 percent increased likelihood of follow-up screening; crystal meth use, linked to an 86 percent increased likelihood; an AIDS diagnosis, 16 percent; and a history of liver disease unrelated to hep C, 241 percent. Those who reported injection drug use were more likely to be screened for HCV during follow-up than gay men or those falling into heterosexual risk categories.

Follow-up screening rates did increase over time in the study.

Even when people in the study had elevated ALTs, which is an indication of liver dysfunction that may be a sign of hep C infection, they were unlikely to be screened during follow-up. Twenty-seven percent of those who had levels above 100 international units per liter and one in five of those with a level above 400 iU/L received a hep C test within a year.

To read the aidsmap story, click here.

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http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/article/screening-follow-up-26235-142043056