Three-Week Treatment?

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Individuals who start a triple regimen of hepatitis C virus (HCV) medications and then see their virus swiftly drop to undetectable levels may only need three weeks of treatment.

To test such a super-short treatment time, researchers conducted a study including 26 Chinese people with genotype 1b of hep C who did not have cirrhosis. The participants received a variety of different triple regimens to treat hep C. Those whose viral load fell below 500 within two days of treatment stayed on the regimen for three weeks, while the others were treated for the standard eight to 12 weeks.

The cure rate was 100 percent among all 18 participants who were treated for three weeks.

“This is a small study, but it opens the door to drastically cut the cost of treatment,” says the study’s head, George Lau, MD, co-director of the Institute of Translational Hepatology & Liver Cirrhosis and Treatment Centre in Beijing. He notes that, even if some people still fail the three-week treatment in a larger study of this treatment protocol, they can be retreated.

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