For Undiagnosed Viruses, Hepatitis C Tops HIV at New York City Hospital

Researchers surveyed adults admitted to the emergency department at a hospital in the Bronx.

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In a recent survey of a New York City emergency department, it was more common to see people with hepatitis C virus (HCV) that had not previously been diagnosed than to see those with undiagnosed HIV, Healio reports.

Publishing their findings in the American Journal of Public Health, researchers surveyed the more than 125,000 people admitted in 2015 to the emergency department at a hospital in the Bronx, one of New York City's five boroughs. Of all urban counties in the United States, the Bronx is the poorest. And among New York City boroughs, the Bronx has the highest rates of unemployment and deaths related to accidental drug overdose.

Of the 4,990 HIV tests conducted, 5 percent (250) were positive. Twelve people who tested positive for this virus were not previously aware of their infection, meaning that 0.2 percent of all HIV tests identified previously undiagnosed cases and 4.8 percent of the positive HIV tests were not previously diagnosed.

Of the 4,989 HCV tests conducted, 3.9 percent (196) were positive. Thirty-eight people who tested positive were not previously aware of their infection, meaning that 0.8 percent of all HCV tests conducted identified previously undiagnosed cases and 19.2 percent of all HCV-positive tests were not previously diagnosed.

"Undiagnosed HCV was more prevalent than undiagnosed HIV in this population," the study authors concluded, "suggesting that aggressive testing initiatives similar to those directed toward HIV should be mounted to improve HCV diagnosis."

To read the Healio article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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