



Hepatitis B, C and Stigma Research From the 2018 International Liver Congress

April 17, 2018 By [Lucinda K. Porter RN](#)

Yesterday I reviewed three hepatitis C studies [presented at the 2018 International Liver Congress](#). Today I give condensed reviews of two more studies. One is hepatitis C-related, the second focuses on research about stigma and hepatitis B.

Abstract: PS-155 Risk of total non-hepatic cancer following treatment for HCV infection with direct-acting antiviral agents - A. Chokkalingam, et al.

Summary: Before the availability of direct-acting antivirals (DAAs), hepatitis C treatment used interferon (IFN). Although the treatment success rates were low and the side effects were high, IFN may have had anti-tumor effects. This industry-sponsored study (Gilead Sciences) compared the risks of total non-liver-related cancer using DAA therapy versus IFN.

Researchers analyzed a U.S. database, identifying 367,156 adults with chronic hepatitis C virus infection enrolled between January 2006 and March 2017. Of these, 22,894 were prescribed DAAs, and 10,989 used IFN. Compared to IFN treatment, use of DAAs was associated with a significantly lower risk of total non-liver-related cancer, relative to IFN.

Editorial Comments: This outcome makes sense. Hepatitis C is associated with increased risk of all types of cancer, so it seems logical that successful treatment would reduce cancer risk.

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Abstract: THU-130 The nature and impact of stigma in patients with chronic hepatitis B: a systematic literature review - J. Smith-Palmer, et al.

Summary: Researchers reviewed 23 articles, looking for evidence of hepatitis B-related stigma. In this situation, stigma was defined as a social process characterized by exclusion, rejection, blame or devaluation due to experience or anticipation of adverse social judgment of a person/group.

They found various types of studies measuring stigma such as via patient interviews. The data were almost exclusively conducted in Asian or Asian immigrant populations. Stigma was common in patients living with hepatitis B; more than 30 percent of the respondents in some of the studies

reporting that they believed that hep B brought shame and or trouble to their families. Some people with hepatitis B believed that they should avoid kissing or hugging others. Up to 20 percent felt that they may be denied health care because of having hep B, and up to 30 percent reported that they may face workplace discrimination because of hep B,

Editorial Comments: For me, stigma was the heaviest burden of having viral hepatitis. [Click here](#) to read more of my thoughts about stigma.

Check back tomorrow for more research presented at the 2018 International Liver Congress.

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