Hepatitis C on the Rise in Women and Children

September 12, 2016 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

First a confession: I took the summer off from hepatitis C. I went to Europe and dealt with some family issues. Although my blog appeared weekly, most of what I wrote was based on general knowledge. In short, I wasn't writing my blog on current hepatitis C news.

Although I had a wonderful time in Europe, the problem with being out of the loop is that now I am trying to catch up with the latest developments related to hepatitis C. I was horrified to read the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) July 22nd Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report discussing the increase in hepatitis C transmission from mother-to-child (vertical).

The article is, "Increased Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Detection in Women of Childbearing Age and Potential Risk for Vertical Transmission — United States and Kentucky, 2011–2014." Here's a summary of the data from 2011-2014:

- In the U.S., there was a 22 percent increase of hepatitis C detection among women of childbearing age. The hepatitis C vertical transmission (infants born to HCV-infected mothers) is up 68 percent.
- Looking at Kentucky (the state with the highest prevalence of hepatitis C), the rate of HCV among women of childbearing age increased more than 200%. The proportion of infants born to HCV-infected women increased 124 percent.

It's one of those articles that makes me cry. When is this insanity going to stop?

Please get involved. Don't know what to do? Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Write a letter to your local newspaper, educating the public about hepatitis C.
- Look the latest news and opportunities on HEP and the HEP Forum.
- Get involved with the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable.
- Check out the CDC's Know More Hepatitis site.

- Read my blog posts from the month of May. Hepatitis Awareness month is when hepatitis C activism is in full swing.

Don’t wait.

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