Hepatitis C Treatment, Drug Interactions, and Liver Injury

July 18, 2016 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

A year ago, I posted a blog about hepatitis C treatment and drug interactions. Since then, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved four more hepatitis C medications: Daklinza, Epclusa, Technivie, and Zepatier. In this blog, I'll discuss the latest research regarding drug-drug interactions, focusing on hepatitis C treatment using a variety of direct-acting antivirals.

The source of my data is from the recent 2016 International Workshop on Clinical Pharmacology of HIV and Hepatitis Therapy. In their research, "High Risk on Drug-Drug Interactions During Hepatitis C Treatment: A Nationwide Cohort," E.J. Smolders and colleagues reported that the use of other drugs during hepatitis C treatment is common. Of the 476 subjects in their study, 356 people were taking at least one other medication at the start of their hep C treatment. Typically, patients took two drugs, with the range being 1 to 17. People took 260 different compounds.

Nearly 60 percent of patients were at risk for a drug-drug interaction from one of their medications interacting with their hep C treatment. Patients taking Viekira had the most drug-drug interactions; Sovaldi had the fewest.

Drug-drug interactions are not the only risk that occurs when we ingest substances carelessly. Drugs and other substances such as herbs and supplements can injure the liver. LiverTox maintains a database of substances that may potentially harm the liver.

The Bottom Line: Everything that goes into your body, whether you eat it, drink it, breathe it, or apply it to your skin, goes through your liver. Further, anything can interact with anything else.

Drugs, alcohol, supplements, and food may interact with drugs (and each other). It does not matter whether the drug is prescribed, over-the-counter, or illicit – all have the potential to interact.

Click here for more information about drug interactions, along with tips to help you reduce your risk.

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