Hepatitis Update

April 29, 2019 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

The 2019 International Liver Congress (ILC) was held in Vienna this year. This annual event, hosted by the European Association for the Study of the Liver, is also referred to as EASL. Below are a few highlights from the meeting.

There was the usual assortment of papers reporting on what we already know, such as treating hepatitis C with direct-acting antivirals is producing favorable outcomes. This is particularly true when looking at risk of hepatocellular carcinoma, aka liver cancer. Hepatitis C retreatment studies also showed favorable outcomes.

Here are my favorite noteworthy presentations:

- My top pick for interesting presentations was The Global Investment Case for Hepatitis C Elimination by Australian professor Margaret Hellard. This simple, elegant presentation is easy to read and offers concrete suggestions on how to eliminate hepatitis C. You can download the presentation on the NATAP website by clicking here. The presentation shows that the United States is not on track to meet the World Health Organization's elimination goals. Hellard also shows that the cost of hep C treatment is highest in the U.S. Note: Another EASL presentation shows that the U.S. is at the bottom of the list, although some of the ranking is due to the fact that the U.S. begins with a letter low in the alphabet. In other words, the U.S. is at the bottom of the list with some other countries.
- A Belgium study found a high prevalence of co-medication use among hepatitis C patients receiving direct-acting antivirals. Researchers found that as many as 22 percent of patients observed in this study had the potential for a drug-drug interaction. (An observational study on comorbidities and comedication patterns in chronic hepatitis C patients treated with second generation direct acting antivirals (DAA) in Belgium - S. Bourgeois, et al.)
- An international study reported that reinfection with hepatitis C virus (HCV) can occur among

people with ongoing injecting drug use following DAA therapy. (Reinfection following successful HCV DAA therapy among people with recent injecting drug use - Jason Grebely, et al.)

Mark your calendars: Hepatitis Awareness Month begins May 1.

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