# Misleading Hep-C Article

January 25, 2017 By Carleen McGuffey

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What a horribly misleading article: Are New Drugs for Hepatitis C Safe? A Report Raises Concerns

There has been some buzz in the Hep-C community regarding an article published by The New York Times. I seriously think articles like this cost lives. I wonder how many people considering treatment for Hep-C will read this and decide its too risky?

The truth is that these new Meds have up to a 99% cure rate. They have saved thousands of lives, and relieved untold suffering around the world.

Read closely folks...there is not one mention of scientific proof that the new antivirals to treat Hep-C are unsafe. These kinds of articles are harmful. They cause people who are afraid of the drugs to not treat. They strike fear in patients who have already been treated.

The writer starts with the truth:

“The number of adverse events appears relatively small, and the findings are not conclusive” but then the writer goes on to imply that these drugs may of caused liver failure, and even death. “In the year ending June 30, 2016, the report identified 524 with liver failure, 165 of whom died.”

Again the writer throws in a nugget of truth...

“But whether the drugs were to blame is not known…and details about the patients’ medical histories were not available.”

THESE DRUGS DON’T CAUSE LIVER FAILURE!!! What a horribly irresponsible way to write an article, as though these people contracted Liver Failure and died because they took the new antivirals. These drugs were prescribed as a last ditch effort to people WHO ALREADY HAD EXISTING LIVER DISEASE and it was too late for them.

The writer crafted Dr. Brown’s comments in a way that also seems to imply the new antivirals are full of problems “scattered accounts of problems with the new drugs and that they should be investigated further.”  Of course Dr. Brown is aware of problems in people with Liver Failure but he specifically warns the writer to not print a sensational story or headline “We don’t want people to ignore it and lead to risks to patients,” he said. “We don’t want people to overreact and not treat patients who should be treated.”

Dr. Brown even clarifies these issues are not from the new antivirals, rather, he shares that "A lot of doctors are unclear about it, and if doctors are unclear, patients are, too." Dr. Brown also "added that problems might arise from some doctors' prescribing incorrectly, giving the drugs to patients with liver function too poor to tolerate them or benefit from them."

Way to go Denise Grady on writing an article that may indeed cost lives. The New York Times is one of the most widely read news outlets in the world. We will never know how many casual readers will be unable to discern the truth, decide these drugs are unsafe and forgo treatment. This article will likely cause a great deal of human suffering.

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