Pegasys/Ribavirin Week 12 and my Upcoming Physical

March 24, 2007 By Mark de Solla Price

On Tuesday I'll start Pegasys/Ribavirin Week 12 and once the bad days pass, then I go in for a full physical (on April 2) to evaluate both how successful the treatment is likely to be (since it's so hard to take, it's not worth it, if it's not doing anything) and also we'll see how my body is holding up to this rough treatment. I know I've lost 35 pounds so far and a lot of stamina.

Reuters broadcast the following item (which was also carried by AIDSmeds.com), and addresses exactly my treatment and the importance of this treatment milestone.

Early HCV Response Predicts Outcome

March 15, 2007 (Reuters Health)

Early virologic response to an interferon-based regimen plus ribavirin for hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection predicts sustained virologic response in patients who are also infected with HIV.

Several studies have already shown that early virologic response predicts sustained virologic response in patients infected with only HCV, Dr. Montserrat Laguno from Hospital Clinic Universitari de Barcelona, and associates explain. But it is unclear whether this holds true in patients co-infected with HIV and HCV.

Dr. Laguno's group investigated the utility of an early virologic response to predict a sustained virologic response to HCV therapy in 95 co-infected patients.

Early virologic response was associated with a sustained virologic response, with a positive predictive value of 64%, the authors report in the February 1st issue of the Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes. In contrast, none of the patients without an early virologic response had a sustained virologic response, the report indicates.

Achieving undetectable HCV RNA at week 4 (a very early virologic response) predicted sustained virologic response with a positive predictive value of 89% and a negative predictive value of 70%, the researchers note.

A very early virologic response had higher positive predictive value for sustained virologic

response when patients received pegylated interferon as opposed to interferon, the results indicate.

“The results of our study suggest that the rules of reduction of 2 log of the viral load at week 12 of HCV therapy in co-infected patients have the same value as those in mono-infected patients,” the investigators conclude.

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