

Hepatitis C Caring Ambassadors Program Newsletter

April 2007



IN THE NEWS

Hepatitis C Remains Most Common Chronic Systemic Viral Infection in United States: Caring Ambassadors Program Urges Caution in Interpretation of CDC Report

http://www.marketwire.com/mw/release_html_b1?release_id=227550

OREGON CITY, OR -- (MARKET WIRE) -- March 16, 2007 -- The Hepatitis C Caring Ambassadors Program issued a statement today urging policy-makers and private citizens not to be lulled into complacency regarding the ongoing hepatitis C crisis in the U.S. The nonprofit advocacy group's statement was a reaction to the report, "Surveillance for Acute Viral Hepatitis - United States, 2005," published today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)." (ROSE: please link to full PR)

Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B Cases at Lowest Levels Ever Reported

<http://www.news-medical.net/?id=22617>

"The three most common forms of acute viral hepatitis in the United States -- hepatitis A, B and C -- declined dramatically between 1995 and 2005, with hepatitis A and B at the lowest levels ever recorded since the government began collecting surveillance data more than 40 years ago, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)."

TL Biopharma Says Phase I Study Of Hepatitis C Drug XTL-6865 Safe At High Doses – Update

<http://www.tradingmarkets.com/.site/news/BREAKING%20NEWS/522092/>

"Early Thursday, XTL Biopharmaceuticals Ltd. revealed the completion of the Phase I study with XTL-6865. The trial result demonstrated that XTL-6865 could be safely administered to patients at high doses of up to 1200mg for 5 consecutive daily doses and a single dose of 2400mg. The study also enabled the company to establish the pharmacokinetic properties of XTL-6865 in patients with chronic hepatitis C."

GPs Armed with New Hepatitis C Resource [UK]

<http://www.healthcarerepublic.com/news/pressrelease/647252/GPs-Armed-New-Hepatitis-C-Resource/>

29-Mar-07 "The Department of Health's FaCe It campaign has launched this week a new guide for primary care professionals providing essential information on the virus. The Department of Health's FaCe It campaign has launched this week a new guide for primary care professionals providing essential information on the virus."

Roche Driving PROGRESS in Treatment of Hepatitis C

<http://www.webwire.com/ViewPressRel.asp?aId=29398>

"Roche today announced the start of a large, multinational trial to examine a new treatment strategy in hepatitis C patients with difficult-to-treat characteristics. This study will evaluate the effect of PEGASYS® (peginterferon alfa-2a) and ribavirin in patients who have a high level of genotype 1 virus in their blood (high viral load) and who are heavier than average in weight. The trial, known as PROGRESS (PEGASYS and Ribavirin Optimized in Genotype 1 high viral load patients to improve SVR), will examine the potential benefits of using a fixed dose induction (360 mcg) of PEGASYS for the first 12 weeks of therapy."

Education another weapon against hepatitis C: Celebrity carriers, including Pamela Anderson, help raise profile of disease

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17616153/>

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – "Hi everyone. I am Leslie. I had hepatitis C. I was treated. I am cured," shouts Leslie Benson, whirling a shawl around her shoulders and jumping to the front of the room. Twenty women lounging on sofas, kneeling on the floor and sitting on the staircase in the corner perk up, turning intently to stare at Benson.

Some smile a bit. This matters deeply to these women, mostly parolees, finishing up sentences in a clean and sober living home.”

Exchange programs help prevent AIDS, hepatitis C

<http://www.toledofreepress.com/?id=5123>

“We face many complex challenges, such as global warming, aging baby boomers, potential pandemics and the decreasing availability of oil. Coping with these issues will require intelligence, cooperation and an ability to challenge some of our established beliefs.”

New York State Health Commissioner: Time to Stop 'Silent Epidemic'

<http://www.emaxhealth.com/39/10492.html>

“Acting State Health Commissioner Richard F. Daines, M.D., announced a major conference on hepatitis C, a disease that has infected as many as 5 million Americans – nearly three times the number of individuals infected with HIV/AIDS. The Department will sponsor Hepatitis C – Breaking the Silence on the Epidemic on March 20 and 21 at the New York Academy of Medicine.”

Hep C crisis threat to jails, outside: Curing prisoners is costly, but not curing them can be deadly

http://www.venturacountystar.com/vcs/state/article/0,1375,VCS_122_5426647,00.html

VACAVILLE — “The most dangerous thing coming out of prison these days may be something most convicts don't even know they have: hepatitis C. Nobody knows how many inmates have the disease; by some estimates, around 40 percent of the 2.2 million in jail and prison are infected, compared with just 2 percent of the general population.”

Tech tools can fight isle hepatitis: A support network envisions rural clinics that use telemedicine to combat the disease

<http://starbulletin.com/2007/03/26/news/story08.html>

“Alan Tice wants to aggressively battle what has been known as a silent epidemic in Hawaii through the Internet. Working with the Hepatitis Support Network of Hawaii, Tice wants to open rural clinics for hepatitis treatment in Hawaii using telemedicine, visiting a patient through a Web camera and video screen with the help of a medical assistant. But first the state Legislature must approve the organization's request for a \$244,000 grant over two years to launch the program.”

PEGASYS(R) Gets European Approval for a Shorter Treatment Duration for Some Genotype 1 and 4 Hepatitis C Patients who Show a Rapid Response to Therapy

http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/news_press_release,69935.shtml

BASEL, Switzerland, March 6 /PRNewswire/ -- Shorter, Simplified Treatment Option May Encourage More Patients to Seek Treatment

“Some hepatitis C patients with difficult-to-treat HCV genotype 1 who respond quickly to treatment with a combination of PEGASYS(R) (pegylated interferon alfa-2a (40KD)) plus COPEGUS(R) (ribavirin) can benefit from a shorter and simplified course of therapy, following Thursday's Commission decision. With the new approval, a subset of patients with genotypes 1 and 4 HCV who achieve rapid viral response can now receive a shortened, 24-week duration of treatment with Roche's PEGASYS plus COPEGUS.”

Valeant Pharmaceuticals Initiates Taribavirin Phase 2b Clinical Study

<http://www.pharmalive.com/News/index.cfm?articleid=423676&categoryid=21>

ALISO VIEJO, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Mar 14, 2007 – “Valeant Pharmaceuticals today announced that it has begun enrolling patients in a Phase 2b clinical study for its antiviral compound, taribavirin, an oral nucleoside (guanosine) analog, for the treatment of chronic hepatitis C in conjunction with a pegylated interferon. The Phase 2b is a multi-center, randomized, parallel, open-label study in 260 treatment-naïve, genotype 1 patients and will evaluate taribavirin at 20 mg/kg, 25 mg/kg, and 30 mg/kg per day in combination with pegylated interferon alfa-2b.

There also will be a control group comprised of ribavirin (800/1,000/1,200/1,400 mg daily) and pegylated interferon alfa-2b.”

Private Home Tattooing

<http://www.soonews.ca/viewarticle.php?id=11215>

“Getting a tattoo from someone who is not inspected by Algoma Public Health is extremely dangerous and poses a significant health risk. Exposure to blood or body fluids can lead to several serious infections such as Hep B, Hep C and HIV. Remember, blood does not have to be present for an infection to occur. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that all personal service businesses follow proper procedures to minimize the risk of personal service workers and their clients from acquiring infectious diseases or personal injury.”

Hep C Policies Failing as Drug Users Fall Ill [Australia]

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,21353718-23289,00.html>

“Despite more than two decades of harm minimisation policies and the ready availability of free syringes, Australia's heroin addicts have some of the highest hepatitis C rates in the world and one-third of prisoners have the potentially deadly virus, according to two new studies. Sydney has outstripped London's alarming rates of infection, with a NSW research team warning that half of all new users contract the virus within three years and the "extremely high" numbers need the urgent attention of Australian policy makers.”

Church Holds Program About HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C

<http://www.sun-herald.com/Newsstory.cfm?pubdate=022507&story=tp7ch2.htm&folder=NewsArchive2>

PUNTA GORDA – “Dr. David Klein had a message for the 40 or so people gathered at First Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church for the sixth annual HIV/AIDS and hepatitis C awareness luncheon. ‘We can make this disease go away in one generation,’ he said.”

Help For Hep C

<http://abclocal.go.com/kfsn/story?section=health&id=5153443>

“Nearly 4 million Americans are living with hepatitis C, and more than a quarter million of them have failed standard treatment options. Now, a newer, tougher drug is curing the virus in more people. For six years, Louise Overman has battled hepatitis C -- a virus that killed the only two people she ever knew who had it.”

Inquiry into Sydney Hep C Outbreak [Australia]

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/news/national/inquiry-into-sydney-hep-c-outbreak/2007/03/30/1174761756952.html>

“AN URGENT investigation is under way into how three women contracted hepatitis C and more than 120 others may have been exposed to the potentially deadly virus at an eastern suburbs GP clinic. It is believed the transmission of the virus was patient-to-patient, and the inquiry has centred on whether there was a breakdown in infection control when patients were receiving vitamin or mineral injections at the clinic.”

Hep C Testing Beginning on Patients [Canada]

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/prince-edward-island/story/2007/03/30/hepc-testing.html>

“Testing for hepatitis C has begun on the patients of a P.E.I. surgeon who contracted the disease. Chief health officer Dr. Lamont Sweet told CBC News Thursday 230 people in total have been notified they should be tested. They have all been patients of Dr. David Ashby, who, after a routine exam in February, was confirmed to have hepatitis C.”

CLINICAL TRIALS, COHORT STUDIES, AND PILOT STUDIES

Accidental exposure to HCV antibody-positive blood in hospital and pre-emptive one-shot interferon alpha-2b treatment. Nukaya H, et al. Hepatol Res. 2007 Mar;37(3):179-85.

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Rapid induction of virus-neutralizing antibodies and viral clearance in a single-source outbreak of hepatitis C. Pestka JM, et al. Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2007 Mar 28; [Epub ahead of print]
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Musculoskeletal Complaints and Serum Autoantibodies Associated with Chronic Hepatitis C and Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease. Banks SE, et al. Dig Dis Sci. 2007 Mar 27; [Epub ahead of print]
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Hepatic steatosis in genotype 4 chronic hepatitis C is mainly because of metabolic factors. Tsochatzis E, et al. Am J Gastroenterol. 2007 Mar;102(3):634-41.
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patic steatosis in genotype 4 is mostly associated with metabolic factors, similar to those in genotype 1.

Clearance of HCV improves insulin resistance, beta-cell function, and hepatic expression of insulin receptor substrate 1 and 2. Kawaguchi T, et al. Am J Gastroenterol. 2007 Mar;102(3):570-6.
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