

Hepatitis C Caring Ambassadors Program Newsletter

June 2007



IN THE NEWS

Bipartisan Hepatitis C Legislation Reintroduced in Both Houses of Congress

<http://new.marketwire.com/2.0/rel.jsp?id=737507>

“The Hepatitis C Epidemic Control and Prevention Act [SB-1445, HR-2552] has been reintroduced into both Houses of the 110th Congress by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Representative Edolphus Towns (D-NY). The Hepatitis C Epidemic Control and Prevention Act mandates a comprehensive federal hepatitis C program to include counseling and testing, early detection, surveillance, education, training, and research. Originally introduced but not voted upon in 2003, the reintroduction of The Hepatitis C Epidemic Control and Prevention Act has been a bipartisan effort. The original cosponsors of the legislation are Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) and Representative Heather Wilson (R-NM).”

Hepatitis C On The Rise In Washington

http://www.kndo.com/Global/story.asp?S=6538957&nav=menu484_2

“YAKIMA, Wash -- Hepatitis C is becoming one of the states top health concerns - with more than 100,000 people infected. Health officials say there about two hundred known case of Hepatitis C in Yakima County. That number is a slightly misleading because many people don't even know they have it.”

Cellular Protein Found That Interferes With Hepatitis C Virus Replication

<http://www.news-medical.net/?id=24384>

“Biomedical researchers have identified a cellular protein that interferes with hepatitis C virus replication, a finding that ultimately may help scientists develop new drugs to fight the virus. The anti-hepatitis C activity of the protein, called ,p21-activated kinase 1, (PAK1), was discovered by scientists at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB), who describe their findings in an article in the current issue of the Journal of Biological Chemistry.”

A Cure For Hepatitis C Using Existing Treatments

<http://www.news-medical.net/?id=25465>

“Researchers in the United States say they have discovered that people infected with hepatitis C can be cured with existing treatments.”

Horror of Hepatitis Time Bomb [UK]

<http://www.halifaxcourier.co.uk/local-news?articleid=2913997>

“Health experts are warning of a "hidden health timebomb" that could explode in Calderdale. Nearly 1,000 people in the area are already infected by hepatitis C “ and many more may be unaware they are carrying the disease. If untreated, its infection can lead to potentially fatal liver disease and liver cancer.”

The Gay Hep C Subculture

<http://www.planetout.com/health/hiv/?sernum=4706&navpath=/topics/health/hiv/>

“A study of gay men with HIV who catch hepatitis C revealed sky-high levels of party drug use, unprotected sex, fisting and group sex among the men who get the virus, considerably higher than among men who don't. After eliminating other causes for hep C transmission, researchers in three clinics in the United Kingdom found that unprotected group (rather than one-to-one) sex, unprotected anal sex and fisting were overwhelmingly more common in the men who caught hep C than a matched group of HIV-positive men who didn't. It also found that the

vast majority of hepatitis C infections studied were linked with one of seven "clusters" of closely related hepatitis C viruses, the largest comprising nearly half of all those infected."

When HIV and Liver Disease Co-Exist

http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2007-06/jws-wha060107.php

"Since successful antiretroviral therapies have made HIV a treatable condition, more HIV patients who are also infected with hepatitis B or C are experiencing the progression of their liver disease. In the face of this novel challenge, experts in the field convened to share information and opinions on the management of such patients."

Hepatitis C and Its Long-Term Effects Are a Growing Problem

http://www.gloucestertimes.com/pulife/local_story_141115703

"In the next decade, several million baby boomers will face the serious, long-term effects of the liver disease hepatitis C. Three to four million people in the United States and an estimated 100,000 in Massachusetts have chronic hepatitis C, compared to 1 million who have HIV."

Surviving Hepatitis C — Do You Harbor this Silent Killer?

<http://www.bloggernews.net/16966>

"Five years ago, a woman named Sally in Seattle called me in Ohio to talk about her Hepatitis C. She was, as I recall, nearing 70 and a retired teacher. Her niece, an adult lawyer, had taken me to lunch to talk to me about her. She said Sally was the dearest sweetest woman; one whose husband was gone, had not had children, and was now alone. I was a columnist for the local newspaper and had been writing about my own Hepatitis C. For a year, I endured a clinical trial that was very much like chemotherapy. The niece told me Sally was afraid to have a liver biopsy, and wondered if I'd mind if her aunt called me."

Hepatitis C Drug Combo Shows Promise

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/features/health/sfl-rxhepc22may22,0,7756483.story?coll=sfla-news-health>

"Doctors and researchers almost never use the word "cure," but they came as close as they ever do Monday when describing a combination of two drugs used to treat the severe liver disease hepatitis C, which is prevalent in South Florida. Among some patients, the drug cocktail of pegylated interferon and ribavirin completely kills the virus that causes hepatitis C, and keeps it from coming back, doctors said in reporting their new study at a Digestive Disease Weekly conference in Washington, D.C."

European Union's CHMP Issues Positive Opinion on PEGINTRON(TM) and REBETOL(R) Combination Therapy for Hepatitis C in Patients Coinfected with HIV

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=69408>

"Schering-Plough Corporation today reported that the Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has issued a positive opinion recommending approval of combination therapy with PEGINTRON(TM) (peginterferon alfa-2b, 1.5 mcg/kg once weekly) and REBETOL(R) (ribavirin, 800 - 1,200 mg daily) for the treatment of previously untreated adult patients with chronic hepatitis C who are coinfecting with clinically stable HIV. Approximately 40 percent of the estimated 2.5 million people living with HIV in Europe are coinfecting with the hepatitis C virus (HCV), according to the World Health Organization (WHO)."

New Test Helps Identify Hepatitis C Patients at High Risk of Developing Cirrhosis

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=69228>

"A researcher at the Stanford University School of Medicine has helped confirm the reliability of a new test for liver disease that is ushering in the long-promised era of personalized medicine based on each individual's genetic makeup. The Stanford group was one of the five sites that helped determine that the genetic test can identify patients who are at high risk of developing cirrhosis from chronic hepatitis C infection. That means high-risk patients could be directed toward a long course of expensive, debilitating drug therapy, while low-risk patients might be better off delaying treatment. "

Nurses Say Many May Have Hepatitis C And Not Know It

<http://www.milforddailynews.com/homepage/x211795200>

“In their years treating patients at MetroWest Medical Center, nurses Kelly Lindebald and Lynn Dempsey have learned there is no such thing as a typical hepatitis C patient. Drug users who have shared needles may have it. So might a suburban stay-at-home mom who had a blood transfusion before 1990.”

Alcohol and Hepatitis C Negatively Impact HIV

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?newsid=72102>

“Researchers at Boston Medical Center (BMC) and Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) have found that persons infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), who also have alcohol problems, were negatively affected by co-infection with the hepatitis C virus (HCV). These findings appear in the June issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical Experimental Research*.”

Nautilus OK'd to Test Hep C Drug

http://www.upi.com/Health_Business/Briefing/2007/05/14/nautilus_okd_to_test_hep_c_drug/3106/

PARIS, May 14 – “Nautilus said Monday the U.S. Food and Drug Administration cleared its potential hepatitis C treatment, oral Belerofon, for a phase 1 trial. Belerofon is a formulation of interferon-alpha that is intended to last longer in serum and reach blood levels comparable to those obtained by injected products.”

Hep C Infection May Increase Risk of Lymphoma: Virus can hike chances of immune-system cancer by 30 percent, experts say

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18558482/>

WASHINGTON – “Infection with the hepatitis C virus, already linked to liver cancer and cirrhosis, also increases the risk of developing non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, a cancer of the immune system, researchers said on Tuesday. Researchers tracked 146,394 U.S. military veterans infected with the virus and 572,293 veterans who were not, and found that hepatitis C infection boosted the risk for non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma by 20 percent to 30 percent.”

CLINICAL TRIALS, COHORT STUDIES, AND PILOT STUDIES

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BASIC AND APPLIED SCIENCE, PRE-CLINICAL STUDIES

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HIV/HCV CO-INFECTION

Recent epidemic of acute hepatitis C virus in HIV-positive men who have sex with men linked to high-risk sexual behaviours. Danta M, et al. AIDS. 2007 May 11;21(8):983-991.

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