



# Caring Ambassadors Hepatitis C Program Newsletter

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## IN THE NEWS

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### **StemCells gets grant to fight hepatitis C**

“StemCells Inc. said Thursday it was awarded a \$305,000 grant from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases to research and develop a potential cell-based therapy for liver disease arising from infection by the hepatitis C virus. Palo Alto-based StemCells said hepatitis C is a global health challenge, with approximately 170 million people affected worldwide and an estimated three million new infections each year. The virus targets liver cells and is a leading cause of end-stage liver disease. The grant will fund work over the next year to investigate whether the company’s human liver engrafting cells can be made resistant to infection by the virus.” [Read more...](#)

### **Biolex to take over full rights to investigational hep C. drug from OctoPlus for \$11M**

“Biolex Therapeutics is paying OctoPlus \$11 million for its 50% share of commercial rights to Locteron for hepatitis C. Biolex also agreed to pay up to \$138 million in development and sales milestones. Additionally, OctoPlus will receive an equity stake in Biolex of up to 3.0%.” [Read more...](#)

### **Hepatitis C treatment is cost-effective for the US prison population**

“Treating all U.S. prisoners who have hepatitis C with the standard therapy of pegylated-interferon and ribavirin would be cost-effective, says a new study in the November issue of *Hepatology*, a journal published by John Wiley & Sons on behalf of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD). The article is also available online at Wiley Interscience ([www.interscience.wiley.com](http://www.interscience.wiley.com)). U.S. prisons incarcerate more than 2 million inmates each year, and between 12 and 31 percent of them are infected with chronic hepatitis C (HCV), mostly related to high rates of intravenous drug use. The current standard treatment for HCV has been shown to be cost-effective in the general population and the Federal Bureau of Prisons recommends HCV treatment for those who meet the AASLD's criteria for treatment, as long as therapy is likely to be completed. However, each state adopts its own set of treatment guidelines, and many prisoners do not ultimately get treated.” [Read more...](#)

### **Official: 114 hepatitis cases may trace to clinics**

“Investigators think they've identified almost all the people who may have contracted the potentially deadly hepatitis C virus at two Las Vegas outpatient medical clinics, a top public health official said Thursday. ‘In putting everything together, we've identified 114 cases in total linked to the two clinics,’ said Brian Labus, the Southern Nevada Health District's senior epidemiologist.” [Read more...](#)

### **Natalie Cole: Dialysis in the day, concerts at night**

“Natalie Cole is sitting comfortably on the couch in her spacious 10th floor condo overlooking Westwood. She's relaxed, and at one point, before making a comment about one of the songs on her new album, she takes a deep breath. That's something she couldn't have done a month ago, when she wound up hospitalized in New York, struck down with fluid-filled lungs and rapidly deteriorating kidneys.

‘I didn't realize how close I was to checking out,’ Cole, 58, said Thursday. It was a dramatic downturn that Cole, her doctors and those around her didn't expect. She had been on the tail end of treatment for hepatitis C, which she learned she was suffering from last February. It was a consequence of her much-publicized drug use in the 1970s and '80s -- for years she was addicted to heroin before she successfully completed rehab in 1983.” [Read more...](#)

### **OraSure's Hepatitis C test awaits FDA approval**

“The nation's first rapid Hepatitis C test could be on the way through the work of a Bethlehem-based company, pending approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. OraSure Technologies Inc. has submitted a pre-market approval application with the FDA for a rapid test for antibodies to the Hepatitis C virus through OraSure's OraQuick technology. With the OraQuick Rapid Hepatitis C test, the company hopes to mirror the success of its OraQuick Advance rapid oral fluid HIV test, which produces results in 20 minutes. The Hepatitis C test boasts an identical turnaround time for results.” [Read more...](#)

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## **CLINICAL TRIALS, COHORT STUDIES, PILOT STUDIES**

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### **Prevalence of cryoglobulinemia and autoimmune markers in liver transplant patients.**

Garrouste C, Kamar N, Boulestin A, et al. *Exp Clin Transplant*. 2008 Sep;6(3):184-9.

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### **Unchanged plasma levels of dimethylarginines and nitric oxide in chronic hepatitis C.**

Lluch P, Cortina B, Vila JM, et al. *Scand J Gastroenterol*. 2008 Oct 25:1-5. [Epub ahead of print]

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### **Hepatitis C virus enhances incidence of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.**

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### **Pegylated interferon-alpha-2a plus ribavirin for treatment-naive Asian patients with hepatitis C virus genotype 1 infection: a multicenter, randomized controlled trial.**

Liu CH, Liu CJ, Lin CL, et al. *Clin Infect Dis*. 2008 Nov 15;47(10):1260-9.

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### **Therapeutic effect of ARBs on insulin resistance and liver injury in patients with NAFLD and chronic hepatitis C: a pilot study.**

Enjoji M, Kotoh K, Kato M, et al. *Int J Mol Med*. 2008 Oct;22(4):521-7.

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### **Peg-interferon alpha-2a versus Peg-interferon alpha-2b in nonresponders with HCV active chronic hepatitis: a pilot study.**

Scotto G, Fazio V, Fornabaio C, et al. *J Interferon Cytokine Res*. 2008 Oct;28(10):623-9.

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**Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)-Specific T Cell Responses in Injection Drug Users with Apparent Resistance to HCV Infection.** Thurairajah PH, Hegazy D, Chokshi S, et al. *J Infect Dis.* 2008 Oct 29. [Epub ahead of print]

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**BASIC AND APPLIED SCIENCE, PRE-CLINICAL STUDIES**

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**Genetic profile of Egyptian hepatocellular-carcinoma associated with hepatitis C virus Genotype 4 by 15 K cDNA microarray: Preliminary study.** Zekri AR, Hafez MM, Bahnassy AA, et al. *BMC Res Notes.* 2008 Oct 29;1(1):106. [Epub ahead of print]

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**Frequent Compartmentalization of Hepatitis C Virus with Leukocyte-Related Amino Acids in the Setting of Liver Transplantation.** Schramm F, Soulier E, Royer C, et al. *J Infect Dis.* 2008 Oct 16. [Epub ahead of print]

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## HIV/HCV COINFECTION

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**Application of transient elastometry to differentiate mild from moderate to severe liver fibrosis in HIV/HCV co-infected patients.** Macías J, Recio E, Vispo E, et al. *J Hepatol.* 2008 Oct 1. [Epub ahead of print]

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**Efficacy of pegylated interferon plus ribavirin treatment in HIV/hepatitis C virus co-infected patients receiving abacavir plus lamivudine or tenofovir plus either lamivudine or emtricitabine as nucleoside analogue backbone.** Mira JA, López-Cortés LF, Barreiro P, et al. *J Antimicrob Chemother.* 2008 Oct 13. [Epub ahead of print]

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#### COMPLEMENTARY & ALTERNATIVE THERAPY

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**Glycyrrhizin and its metabolite inhibit Smad3-mediated type I collagen gene transcription and suppress experimental murine liver fibrosis.** Moro T, Shimoyama Y, Kushida M, et al. *Life Sci.* 2008 Oct 10;83(15-16):531-539. Epub 2008 Aug 16.

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#### EPIDEMIOLOGY, DIAGNOSTICS, AND MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

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