

Keeping hepatitis C virus at bay after a liver transplant

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One of the most common reasons for needing a liver transplant is liver failure or liver cancer caused by liver cell infection with hepatitis C virus (HCV). However, in nearly all patients the new liver becomes infected with HCV almost immediately. But now, Hideki Ohdan, Kazuaki Chayama, and colleagues, at Hiroshima University, Japan, have developed an approach that transiently keeps HCV levels down in most treated HCV-infected patients receiving a new liver.

Specifically, the team took immune cells known as [lymphocytes](#) from the donor livers before they were transplanted into the HCV-infected patients, activated them in vitro, and then injected them into the patients three days after they had received their liver transplants.

Importantly, these infused cells were able to keep the HCV at bay even though the patients were taking immunosuppressive drugs to prevent their immune systems from rejecting the new livers. Despite showing clear clinical effects, the authors are planning further studies in which they will modify the protocol in an attempt to find a way to keep HCV levels down for longer and in all patients.

More information: Adoptive immunotherapy with liver allograft-derived lymphocytes induces anti-HCV activity after liver transplantation in humans and humanized mice, View the PDF of this article at: www.the-jci.org/article.php?id=38374

Source: Journal of Clinical Investigation

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