

Hep C infected livers offer similar outcomes to healthy livers in those waiting for liver transplant

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Data from a new study presented today may help reduce the waiting time for a liver transplant for people with the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). The study, presented at The International Liver Congress 2016 in Barcelona, Spain, demonstrated that the medium to long-term outcomes for people with HCV who have received a HCV-positive liver were no different from those who were given a healthy liver.

Since 1995 in the United States, the use of HCV-positive livers for [liver transplants](#) in people with HCV has tripled from 2.9% to 9.4% (2013 figure). There are over 8,500 people in Europe¹ and over 15,000 people in the United States waiting for a liver transplant currently, with this number expected to increase.² For example, in the UK, people waiting for liver transplants increased by 12% between 2013 and 2014.³ Furthermore, in the United States approximately 16% of patients die while awaiting a liver transplant.²

"Over the past two decades, mainly due to shortages in organs, the use of HCV positive organs for liver transplantation has tripled" said Professor Zobair Younossi MD, MPH, Chairman of Department of Medicine, Inova Fairfax Hospital, Falls Church, VA, USA, and lead study author. "Our study clearly shows that people with HCV who received HCV-positive livers had the same medium to long-term outcomes as people that received healthy livers. As highly effective treatments for HCV are available for transplanted patients, the future of these patients is bright."

The American study selected all adult patients with HCV who underwent liver transplantation between 1995 and 2013 from the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients. It compared the long-term graft loss and mortality in those who were transplanted from HCV-positive versus HCV-negative.

Of the 33,668 people with HCV receiving a liver transplant selected in the study, 5.7% were given a HCV-positive liver. The study showed that the HCV status of the liver had no effect on the amount of time to post-transplant death.

"This study clearly demonstrates a greater opportunity for use of HCV positive livers over the coming years due to their comparable outcomes with healthy livers" said Professor Tom Hemming Karlsen, EASL Vice-Secretary. "With the number of people waiting for a [liver](#) transplant expected to rise, the study results should give hope over the coming years for those on the waiting list."

More information: References:

1 European Commission. Organ donation and transplantation: Facts and figures. Published November 2014. Available from: ec.europa.eu/health/blood_tiss...factsfigures_en.pdf. Last accessed: March 2016.

2 Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network. Annual Data Report 2011: Liver. Available from: srtr.transplant.hrsa.gov/annua...reports/2011/pdf/03_%20liver_12.pdf. Last accessed: March 2016.

3 The Hepatitis C Trust. Liver transplant statistics. Available from: www.hepctrust.org.uk/liver-transplant-statistics. Last accessed: March 2016.

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