

Hepatitis C infection doubles risk for kidney cancer

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Physicians at Henry Ford Hospital have found that infection with the hepatitis C virus increases the risk for developing kidney cancer.

Using administrative data from more than 67,000 Henry Ford Health System patients, physicians found that over the period 1997-2008, 0.6% (17/3057) patients with [hepatitis](#) C infection developed kidney cancer whereas only 0.3% (17/64006) patients without the disease developed kidney cancer.

After controlling for age, gender, race and underlying [kidney disease](#), hepatitis C infected patients had nearly double the risk of developing kidney cancer.

"These results add to growing literature that shows that the hepatitis C virus causes disease that extends beyond the liver, and in fact most of our HCV-infected kidney cancer patients had only minimal liver damage," says Stuart C. Gordon, M.D., director of Hepatology at Henry Ford Hospital and lead author of the study.

The study was published in this month's *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research.

Dr. Gordon explains that the results suggest a more careful surveillance of newly diagnosed kidney cancer patients for the presence of hepatitis C infection, one of the few cancers with a rising global incidence. He

adds that it is premature to recommend more comprehensive screening of HCV-positive patients.

"However, a heightened awareness of an increased kidney cancer risk should dictate more careful follow-up of incidental renal defects when detected on imaging procedures in patients with chronic hepatitis C," says Dr. Gordon.

The researchers also found that the average age of HCV-positive patients with kidney cancer was significantly younger than those HCV-negative patients with [kidney cancer](#), a cancer that generally affects older individuals.

Dr. Gordon explains that [hepatitis C](#) is curable in more than 50 percent of cases and that newer and better treatment regimens are being developed. Henry Ford Hospital is participating in a number of these trials.

More information: American Association for Cancer Research, Hepatitis C and Renal Cell Carcinoma, Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention, 19(4) April 2010.

Provided by Henry Ford Health System

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