

Delaying treatment for hepatitis C puts patients' lives at risk

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Data revealed today at The International Liver Congress 2015 highlights the impact of delaying treatment for the hepatitis C virus (HCV). Researchers found that treatment delays have a serious detrimental effect on treatment efficacy, increasing the risk of morbidity and mortality among patients.

The study was conducted using retrospective patient data from the Veterans Administration in the USA to estimate the impact on risk of morbidity and death depending on whether [treatment](#) was initiated before or after a patient's FIB4 levels became elevated. The FIB4 index is a simple formula used to predict [liver damage](#) (fibrosis) based on standard biochemical values and age.

Researchers found that delaying treatment until after a patient's FIB4 level exceeds 3.25 has a clear detrimental effect on treatment effectiveness. Delaying therapy until after the patient's FIB4 level exceeds 1.45 or 1.00 has a smaller detrimental effect on treatment effectiveness.

The study demonstrates that delaying HCV treatment in an attempt to save costs has a serious adverse impact on patients, with the most serious effect being the speeding up of time to death. Once HCV diagnosis has been confirmed the most suitable treatment should be initiated as soon as feasible balancing budgetary cash-flow issues against adverse impacts on patients.

Provided by European Association for the Study of the Liver

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