

Hepatitis C testing, treatment down during the pandemic

May 18 2021



(HealthDay)—The COVID-19 pandemic reduced routine hepatitis C

virus (HCV) testing and treatment, according to a study published online May 10 in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

Harvey W. Kaufman, M.D., from Quest Diagnostics in Secaucus, New Jersey, and colleagues assessed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on routine HCV testing and treatment. Using data from a national reference clinical laboratory, the average number of HCV antibody tests, HCV antibody positive [test](#) results, and HCV RNA positive test results by month for January to July 2018 and 2019 were compared to the same months in 2020. The impact of the pandemic on HCV treatment was assessed through national estimates of dispensed prescriptions for HCV treatment.

The researchers found that HCV antibody testing volume decreased 59 percent during April 2020 versus 2018 and 2019 but rebounded to a 6 percent reduction in July 2020. For HCV RNA positive results, the numbers fell by 62 percent in March 2020 and remained 39 percent below the baseline by July 2020. Relative to corresponding months in 2018 and 2019, in May 2020, HCV treatment prescriptions decreased 43 percent compared with 37 percent in June 2020 and 38 percent in July 2020.

"It's important we communicate the need to bring HCV testing and treatment above prepandemic levels to identify people who have delayed or skipped [health care services](#)," Kaufman said in a statement.

"Fortunately, HCV infection is now a curable condition and taking an HCV antibody screening test is the first step."

Several authors disclosed financial ties to Quest Diagnostics, which funded the study.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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Citation: Hepatitis C testing, treatment down during the pandemic (2021, May 18) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-05-hepatitis-treatment-pandemic.html>

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