Antiviral Therapy for Hepatitis C Lowers Cardiovascular Disease Risk

The risk was lower in people who had achieved a sustained virological response compared with those who had not.

February 19, 2021 By Sukanya Charuchandra

Antiviral therapy for hepatitis C lowered the risk for cardiovascular disease, which is otherwise associated with the viral infection. Results from the meta-analysis study were published in the Journal of Viral Hepatitis.

Chronic hepatitis C is linked to a higher risk of cardiovascular disease. But previous research has been unclear on whether antiviral therapy for hep C can lower this risk. Xin Su, MD, of Beijing Anzhen Hospital, and colleagues conducted a meta-analysis to determine the links between antiviral therapy and the risk of developing cardiovascular disease. The team scanned the PubMed, EMBASE and Cochrane databases from their beginning through August 2020.

The researchers analyzed 11 studies that together included 309,470 participants. They assessed the risk of any type of cardiovascular event, stroke and coronary artery disease. Of the 11 studies, four examined cardiovascular disease risk among people who did and did not receive antiviral therapy for hepatitis C, with five each also reporting on stroke and coronary artery disease. Five studies looked at cardiovascular disease risk among patients who did and did not achieve a sustained virological response (SVR), defined as an undetectable viral load recorded 12 weeks after completing treatment.

The team found that receiving antiviral therapy for hepatitis C was linked to a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, coronary artery disease and stroke compared with those who remained untreated. Also, individuals who attained an SVR had a much lower risk of developing cardiovascular disease compared with those who were not cured.

“This meta-analysis demonstrated that antiviral therapy for [hepatitis C virus] was associated with a reduced risk of [cardiovascular disease] events,” wrote the researchers.

Click here to read the study abstract in the Journal of Viral Hepatitis.
