

**GRP-
055**

EFFECT OF ANTIVIRAL TREATMENT, VIRAL LOAD AND STAGE OF FIBROSIS IN QUALITY OF LIFE OF HEPATITIS C-INFECTED PATIENTS

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BACKGROUND

Some authors have reported reductions in health-related quality of life (HRQOL) of hepatitis C (HCV)-infected patients, but studies fail to discriminate the influence of factor such as the antiviral regimen, the viral load (VL) or the degree of fibrosis

PURPOSE

To evaluate HRQOL in chronically-ill HCV patients prior and after treatment initiation.

METHODS

Inclusion criteria: patients >18-years old, HCV-antibodies+ and HCV-RNA+, no other relevant co-morbidities. Recruitment period: 9-months. Patients were layered according to the previous VL and their degree of fibrosis, and started on antiviral therapy based on ribavirin+peginterferon. On their follow-up visits (weeks 0, 4 and 12), subjects received a validated questionnaire (SF36) to be completed at home and delivered on their next visit to the outpatient pharmacy ward. SPSS v17 (IBM®, Nueva York, USA) was used for the statistical analysis.

RESULTS

18 subjects recruited (male 67%, mean age 47.3), 10 with genotype 2 or 3 and 8 with genotype 1 or 4

Low-grade fibrosis (stage 1-2): 11 patients
high-grade fibrosis (3-4): 7 patients

9 patients had >800,000 RNA copies/mL at presentation

With regard to the antiviral therapy, statistically significant differences in the following items were found between week 0 and week 4:

- Physical functioning (p=0.046)
- Physical role (p=0.001)
- Pain (p=0.001)
- Health (0.046)
- Energy/fatigue (p=0.001)
- Emotional wellbeing (p=0.001).

Additionally, we found statistically significant differences in the emotional component with regard to the VL (p=0.005) and the degree of fibrosis (p=0.03).

CONCLUSIONS

Antiviral therapy was associated with deterioration in HRQOL. Items involving physical health exhibited the greatest differences. Conversely, those subjects with higher VL and advanced degree of fibrosis had worse scores in the items involving emotional wellbeing. Long-term studies are currently being conducted to determine whether the existing differences emphasize over time, as well as the implications of these findings.