Hepatitis C: Update on Testing and Treatment

Karla Thornton, MD, MPH
Professor, Infectious Diseases
University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center
kthornton@salud.unm.edu
Learning Objectives

• Identify the recommended screening guidelines for Hepatitis C.
• Recognize who should be prioritized for Hepatitis C treatment.
• Describe the new paradigm for Hepatitis C treatment using all oral therapies.
Hepatitis C is a Global Health Problem

Hepatitis C Prevalence (NHANES estimate)

- 3.2 Million HCV Antibody positive.
- Possibly up to 7.1 Million HCV Antibody positive in US.

Chak E, et al. Liver Int. 2011;31:1090-1101
Prevalence of HCV in Select Populations

- Incarcerated ~330,000-860,000 (16-41%).
- IVDU ~300,000 (80-90%).
- HIV infected ~300,000 (30%).
- Alcoholics ~240,000 (11-36%).
- Living below poverty level ~940,000 (2.4%).
- Homeless ~175,000 (22%).
- Veterans ~280,000 (8%).
- Children age 6-18 ~100,000 (.1%).
Prevalence of HCV Antibody, by Year of Birth

Incidence of Acute Hepatitis C

By race/ethnicity — United States, 2000–2010

Source: National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS)
HCV: Transmission

- Blood:
  - IDU is the leading cause in the United States
  - Blood transfusion (Before 1992)
  - Percutaneous injuries
- Sexual contact:
  - Rare in heterosexual
  - More frequent in MSM
- Mother-to-child:
  - Rate is 1.7% - 4.3%
HCV Transmission

• Many patients do not know they were exposed.
• Many patients were exposed and infected decades ago.
• For a proportion of patients, source of HCV infection cannot be determined.
HCV household recommendations

• Do not share razors, toothbrushes, needles.
• No special precautions for sexual partners with discordant HCV status.
• No other precautions are necessary.
Who Should be Screened for HCV?
Groups Recommended for HCV Testing by AASLD

- Recent/past injection drug users—even if only used once.
- Groups with high HCV prevalence: HIV-infected, Hemophiliacs, Hemodialysis recipients, Patients with unexplained AST/ALT elevations.
- Children born to women infected with HCV.
- Healthcare, public safety, and emergency medical personnel following needle injury or mucosal exposure to HCV-infected blood.
- Current sexual partners of individuals infected with HCV.

Awareness of HCV Infection Status


Rationale for Considering Birth Cohort Screening Recommendations

• 45%-85% of infected persons are undiagnosed.

• Limitations of current risk-based strategies.

• 75% of chronic infections are in persons born from 1945-1965.
Recommendations for the Identification of Chronic Hepatitis C Virus Infection Among Persons Born During 1945–1965
Screening for HCV infection in Adults: USPSTF Recommendations

• Released June 24, 2013.
• USPSTF Grade B recommendation:
  • Adults at high risk.
  • Adults born 1945-1965.
• Grade B:
  • Co-pay support (ACA).
  • Priority for performance measures.
• Consistent with CDC recommendations.
IHS HCV Screening

• Developmental GPRA measure since 2011.
• Cumulative measure (screened once ever).
• Screening rates have tripled to approximately 30% of birth cohort screened in federal sites.
• Leading Service Units have already completed >50% screening.
IHS HCV Screening – Birth Cohort

• Leading sites doing one or more of the following:
  • Use of HCV screening reminder in EHR.
  • Standing protocol/order for HCV screening.
  • Delegate screening away from provider (usually nurses).
Recommended Testing Sequence for Identifying Current Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Infection

* For persons who might have been exposed to HCV within the past 6 months, testing for HCV RNA or follow-up testing for HCV antibody is recommended. For persons who are immunocompromised, testing for HCV RNA can be considered.
† To differentiate past, resolved HCV infection from biologic false positivity for HCV antibody, testing with another HCV antibody assay can be considered. Repeat HCV RNA testing if the person tested is suspected to have had HCV exposure within the past 6 months or has clinical evidence of HCV disease, or if there is concern regarding the handling or storage of the test specimen.
Slide courtesy AASLD Curriculum & Training
Management of Patients with Positive HCV Antibody and Undetectable HCV RNA

• If patient previously treated for HCV, this indicates cure:
  • No need for repeat HCV-RNA testing.
  • Does not imply immunity to HCV.

• If liver function tests tests abnormal:
  • Evaluate for other causes of liver disease.
  • If suspect acute HCV or recent exposure, repeat HCV RNA within 6 months.
Hepatitis C: Progression of Disease

- Normal Liver
- Chronic Hepatitis
- Cirrhosis
- 20-25 years
- 25-30 years
- HCC
- ESLD
- Death

HCV Infection
The Approaching Storm

- Long-Term Consequences of Untreated HCV.
Forecasted Annual Incident Cases of Decompensated Cirrhosis (DCC), Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC), Liver Transplants, and Deaths Associated with Persons with Chronic Hepatitis C Infection and No Liver Cirrhosis in the United States in 2005

Progression of Disease

- Disease progression is variable and non-linear.
- Modifiable factors are important in disease progression and should be addressed:
  - Weight loss.
  - Diabetes control.
  - Alcohol and marijuana.
HCV is not just a Liver Disease
Common Symptoms of HCV in the Absence of Cirrhosis

- Fatigue.
- Impaired cognitive function (brain fog).
- Migratory arthralgia or myalgia.
- Depression.
Extrahepatic Manifestations (1)

- Approximately 40% of HCV patients will develop at least one extrahepatic manifestation.
- Often not clinically recognized.
- Many patients may not have concurrent evidence of liver disease.
Extrahepatic Manifestations (2)

- Renal Disease.
- Neuropathy.
- Dermatologic Manifestations.
- Diabetes.
- Lymphomas.
Porphyria Cutanea Tarda (PCT)
Diabetes

- Risk increased by 70% compared to non-infected controls (OR 1.7).
- Successful HCV treatment associated with decrease in insulin resistance and reduction in incidence of diabetes mellitus.

Why does HCV increase the risk for DM?
Direct effects of HCV on DM risk

- Pancreatic islet cell infection:
  - 39% of pancreatic islets infected
  - +Evidence of β-cell dysregulation

Effects of DM on HCV Infection

- Exacerbates progression of liver disease
- Reduces efficacy of HCV treatment
- Increases risk of HCC by 70%

Extrahepatic Manifestations (3)

- Patients with extrahepatic manifestations should be prioritized for treatment.
- Successful treatment of HCV reduces risk of DM and lymphoma.
- Successful treatment of HCV has benefit for vasculitis and renal disease.
The Evolution of Highly Effective Treatment

Adapted from the US Food and Drug Administration, Antiviral Drugs Advisory Committee Meeting, April 27-28, 2011, Silver Spring, MD.
Sofosbuvir

- NS5B polymerase inhibitor (chain terminator).
- Potent activity against genotypes 1–6.
- Once-daily, oral, 400-mg tablet.
- Safe and well tolerated.
- Priced at $80,000 per 12 week course.
> 90% SVR 12 Across Treatment-Naïve Genotypes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

The Holy Grail of HCV Therapy: Interferon Free
Ledipasvir/Sofosbuvir: A Single Tablet Regimen (STR)

- Approval Status: FDA approved October 10, 2014.
- Dosing: One tablet (fixed dose 90 mg ledipasvir/400 mg sofosbuvir) orally once daily with or without food.
- Wholesale Acquisition Cost in United States: $1125 per pill:
  - 8-week course = $63,000
  - 12-week course = $94,500
  - 24-week course = $189,000

Source: Harvoni Prescribing Information. Gilead Sciences
ION Phase 3 Program (ION-1, ION-2, ION-3)

Efficacy Summary

- 97% (1886/1952) overall SVR rate

Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.


# Ledipasvir-Sofosbuvir (Harvoni) Indications and Usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genotype 1 Patient Populations</th>
<th>Treatment Duration*</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Treatment naïve with or without cirrhosis.</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment experienced** without cirrhosis.</td>
<td>12 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment experienced** with cirrhosis</td>
<td>24 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Consider treatment duration of eight weeks in treatment-naïve patients without cirrhosis who have a pretreatment HCV RNA less than 6 million UI/mL.

**Treatment-experienced patients who have failed treatment with either of the following:

- Peginterferon alfa plus ribavirin.
- HCV protease inhibitor plus peginterferon alfa plus ribavirin.

*Source: Harvoni Prescribing Information. Gilead Sciences.*
Who should be treated for HCV?

- Persons with chronic HCV infection.
Highest Priority for Treatment: Highest Risk of Severe Complications

- Advanced fibrosis (Metavir F3) or compensated cirrhosis (Metavir F4).
- Organ transplant.
- Type 2 or 3 essential mixed cryoglobulinemia with end-organ manifestations (eg, vasculitis).
- Proteinuria, nephrotic syndrome, or membranoproliferative glomerulonephritis.

High Priority: High Risk for Complications

- Fibrosis (Metavir F2).
- HIV-1 coinfection.
- HBV coinfection.
- Other coexistent liver disease (e.g., NASH).
- Debilitating fatigue.
- Type 2 Diabetes mellitus.
- Porphyria cutanea tarda.

Staging Hepatitis C

• Invasive:
  • Liver biopsy (Gold Standard historically).

• Non Invasive:
  • Fibroscan.

• Laboratory markers:
  • AST Platelet Ratio Index (APRI).
  • FIB-4 Index.
  • Fibrosure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fibrosis</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>No fibrosis</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portal fibrosis w/o septa</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few septa</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numerous septa w/o cirrhosis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cirrhosis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APRI Calculator

AST to Platelet Ratio Index (APRI) Calculator

This is an AST to Platelet Ratio Index calculator tool. Enter the required values to calculate the APRI value. The APRI Score will appear in the oval on the far right (highlighted in yellow). Most laboratories use 40 IU/L as the value for the AST upper limit of normal.

\[
\text{APRI} = \frac{\text{AST Level (IU/L)}}{\text{AST (Upper Limit of Normal) (IU/L)}} \times 100 = \]

Interpretation:
In a meta-analysis of 40 studies, investigators concluded that an APRI cutoff of 1.0 had a sensitivity of 76% and specificity of 72% for predicting cirrhosis. Similarly, an APRI cutoff of 0.7 had a sensitivity of 77% and specificity of 72% for predicting significant hepatic fibrosis.

Why Treat HCV Now?

- The costs for HCV are significantly higher for those with more severe disease.
- Chronic HCV infection increases mortality.
- Those who achieve SVR see a reduction in HCV morbidity and mortality.
- SVR rates are higher in patients with milder vs more advanced disease.
What do we get with HCV Treatment?

- SVR (cure) of HCV is associated with:
  - 70% Reduction of Liver Cancer.
  - 50% Reduction in All-cause Mortality.
  - 90% Reduction in Liver Failure.

Lok A. NEJM 2012; Ghany M. Hepatol 2009; Van der Meer AJ. JAMA 2012
Cirrhosis Regression and Fibrosis Reduction Following SVR

Hepatitis C Cascade of Care in United States

Role of the Primary Care Clinician in HCV

- Screening for HCV.
- Counseling on modifiable risk factors important in disease progression (weight loss, diabetes control, alcohol, marijuana).
- Staging of liver disease.
- Recognition of extra-hepatic manifestations.
- Treatment (with mentoring) or linkage to someone who treats HCV.
Project ECHO
IHS HCV Clinic
IHS HCV ECHO Participating Sites

Map: nationalatlas.gov
Opportunities for Mentoring and Treatment through Telehealth

- UNM ECHO (Albuquerque).
- UW ECHO (Seattle).
- Arizona ECHO (Phoenix, St. Joseph’s).
- University of Utah ECHO (Salt Lake City).
- Baylor ECHO (Houston).
- ANTHC (AK facilities).
Opportunities for Mentoring and Treatment through Telehealth (cont.)

- ECHO provides CMEs for attendance, even if not treating patients.
- CPEs also available at ABQ ECHO sessions.
Cost Issues and Drug Access

• Over $1000 per pill.
• Many state Medicaid and insurance programs limiting access.
• Patient Assistance Programs (PAPs).
• Paperwork required but gets quicker with experience.
• IHS success with PAPs excellent so far.
• Webinar devoted to PAPs including templates for forms and letters is scheduled for IHS.
Final Thoughts

• The HCV Epidemic is upon us:
  • 3 to 5 million chronically infected.
  • Rapidly rising liver-related mortality.

• Testing and linkage to care are needed:
  • Still only 25% - 50% estimated diagnosed.
  • Limited number of providers familiar with HCV treatment (Project ECHO).

• HCV treatments are improving rapidly:
  • Costs may be prohibitive to allow equitable access.
  • Complex medical and societal issue.
Slide Acknowledgments

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Questions?