

MEETING ABSTRACT

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Chronic pain and substance use in patients with Hepatitis C

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The hepatitis C virus (HCV) is the most common blood-borne infection and affects approximately 2% of the U.S. population, with higher rates occurring in some segments of the population. Chronic pain affects approximately 35% of the general population, with 15% of individuals experiencing daily pain. In contrast, the prevalence of chronic pain among HCV patients may exceed 65%.

The reasons for the high rates of chronic pain among HCV patients are not clear. More than two-thirds of HCV patients have a history of substance use disorder (SUD), and history of SUD is associated with the development of pain. HCV patients also have high rates of co-morbid psychiatric disorders, which are also associated with chronic pain.

The purpose of this presentation will be to outline the issue of chronic pain and substance use among HCV patients and to describe factors that may lead to the high rate of chronic pain in this patient population. The results of ongoing studies that examined the role of biopsychosocial factors in the development and exacerbation of chronic pain in HCV patients will also be described.

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