Older People Who Cleared Hepatitis B Still Have Raised Risk of Liver Cancer

This is particularly true among men older than 50, who warrant greater monitoring.

May 5, 2017

People older than 50, especially men, who have been functionally cured of hepatitis B virus (HBV) remain at a higher risk of hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC, the most common form of liver cancer) and warrant greater monitoring, Medscape reports.

Researchers assessed people with chronic hep B who experienced seroclearance of their HBV surface antigen between 2000 and 2016. The study population of 5,181 people, identified through a Hong Kong health care database, was followed for an average 3.7 years. Sixty-nine percent of them experienced seroclearance after age 50.

Findings were presented at the 52nd International Liver Congress in Amsterdam.

Of 67 individuals who developed liver cancer during the study's follow-up period, most were men age 50 and up.

The respective cumulative diagnosis rates of liver cancer by year one, year three and year five following seroclearance, were 0.2 percent, 0.2 percent and 0.2 percent among women age 50 and younger; 0.5 percent, 0.6 percent and 0.8 percent among men age 50 and younger; 1.1 percent, 1.3 percent and 1.3 percent among women age 50 and older; and 1.4 percent, 2.1 percent and 2.5 percent among men age 50 and older.

Variables that apparently contributed to liver cancer risk among the older men included more severe liver disease at the time of seroclearance, somewhat lower albumin levels, somewhat higher bilirubin levels and slightly higher ALT liver enzyme levels.

To read the Medscape article, click here (free registration with the site is required).

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.