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DEPRESSION AND HEPATITIS C

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Combination therapy of peginterferon and ribavirin for HCV has been recommended as a first choice for chronic hepatitis C. INF therapy has been associated with various IFN-related adverse events, such as psychological disturbances. Beyond that preexisting mental disorders are considered risk factors for INF-alfa-induced severe psychiatric side effects such as depression and/or suicidality, consequently many of these patients remain untreated even though they fulfil the medical criteria for antiviral treatment of chronic hepatitis C.

The authors relate the case of a patient, 56 year's old, sent to infecciology consultation because she had alterations in abnormal liver function tests. She had a previous history of mental disorder with neurotic personality traits and she was treated with psychiatric medication.

She had treatment for chronic hepatitis C with peginterferon and ribavirin as well psychiatric and psychotherapeutic support.

A low sustained virologic response was obtained however the depressive picture has been difficult to handle so she had had already had a psychiatric hospitalization. There were several adverse life events that can not be forgotten as they certainly trigger and exacerbate the depressive symptomatology.

We assume that psychiatric patients have more depressive symptoms before and during treatment compared with patients without no psychiatric history. This shows that this patients have an increase need for treatment with antidepressants and that a close cooperation with a psychiatrist is always needed.