

P02-67

INDUCED DEPRESSION DURING ANTIVIRAL TREATMENT IN CHRONIC HEPATITIS C
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Introduction: The hepatitis C virus infection (HVC) represents a public health problem that affects the 3% of world population. The currently recommended treatment is Pegylated Interferon (PegIFN) alpha and Ribavirin (RBV) during 24 or 48 weeks. This treatment has been associated with high rates of neuropsychiatric side effects, mainly depression. Recent studies have documented impairment in health related quality of life (SF-36) in these patients.

Aims: To study the induced depression and quality of life of chronic HVC patients under antiviral treatment.

Methods: Three hundred seventeen consecutive HCV patients, who received PegIFN alpha and RBV, were assessed using the SCID interview for DSM-IV. Moreover, the PHQ, the HADS and the SF-36 were administered at baseline, 4, 12, 24, and/or 48 weeks of treatment.

Results: Two hundred twenty-four (64.7 %) of patients were men, the mean (SD) age was 43.6 (10.6), and 130 (40.1%) had history of mood disorder. One-hundred eleven (41%) of the sample had a depressive disorder during the treatment. There was a significant difference in the total SF-36 score and in all subscales ($p < 0.001$). HADS subscale of depression was highly correlated with SF-36 total score ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusions: During the antiviral treatment, HVC patients had a higher incidence of induced depression. Both physical and mental component scores of SF-36 in induced depressed patients were significantly worse.

This study has been supported in part by Spanish grants: FIS E08/00268, Dra. Martín-Santos, and Dr. Solà.