Adding interventions to interferon in chronic HCV infections

Interferon alfa is the only licensed therapy for chronic hepatitis C. The response rate with interferon monotherapy in terms of sustained loss of HCV RNA is 20–25%. It is now possible to predict, from baseline host and viral factors and from the early response to interferon, which patients are most likely to respond to therapy. Patients with cirrhosis or type 1b infection, for example, are less likely to respond to interferon. More prolonged treatment courses and higher doses of interferon are associated with improved response rates but both these approaches are complicated by reduced patient compliance and limited by treatment costs.

Ribavirin monotherapy results in a temporary reduction in the transaminase levels but only a modest and transient decrease in the HCV RNA levels. The combination of interferon alfa and ribavirin, however, seems promising for naive patients and for those who have failed to respond to monotherapy. Thymus-derived polypeptides and synthetic peptapeptide.

Combination of interferon alfa with ribavirin is the treatment of choice for patients with HCV infection. The combination of thymosin alpha 1 and interferon alfa-2b in the treatment of chronic HCV infection is effective in reducing the viral load and improving the liver histology. The combination of interferon alfa and ribavirin is the treatment of choice for patients with chronic HCV infection.

In summary, the results from these small studies are encouraging but it is only with the results of large, multicentre trials with long-term follow up that we can determine the potential clinical benefit of new interventions as treatment for chronic viral hepatitis.

JANICE MAIN

Department of Medicine, Imperial College School of Medicine, St Mary's Hospital, London W2 1NY

Adding interventions to interferon in chronic HCV infections.

J Main

Gut 1996 39: 769
doi: 10.1136/gut.39.5.769

Updated information and services can be found at:
http://gut.bmj.com/content/39/5/769.citation

Email alerting service

These include:
Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article. Sign up in the box at the top right corner of the online article.

Topic Collections
Articles on similar topics can be found in the following collections
Hepatic cancer (474)
Hepatitis C (160)
Hepatitis B (88)

Notes

To request permissions go to:
http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions

To order reprints go to:
http://journals.bmj.com/cgi/reprintform

To subscribe to BMJ go to:
http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/