

HKU researchers connect liver cancer with Hepatitis B

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Researchers in Hong Kong have found that hepatitis B treatment reduces the incidence of liver cancer. Hepatitis B is a common infectious disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). Hepatitis B can be transmitted through blood and body fluids, through sexual contact, the transfusion of contaminated blood and the sharing of contaminated needles.

The incubation period of HBV ranges from 45 to 160 days. In Hong Kong, approximately eight percent of the population are infected with HBV. If not detected early, patients who are infected with HBV will become chronic carriers of the virus.

In this study, the research team at the University of Hong Kong (HKU) obtained 14-year HBV treatment data in specialist outpatient clinics from the Hospital Authority. The team statistically studied the effect of HBV treatment on liver cancer trends from 1990 to 2012 and confirmed that HBV treatment is associated with a reduction in overall liver cancer incidence. The team also studied the effect of treatment in specific age groups.

The HKU study confirms the effectiveness of HBV treatment in reducing the burden of liver cancer. Thus, HKU encourages HBV-infected patients to receive long-term follow-up consultations with their physicians, seeking treatment when necessary.