

Sample research paper on hepatitis

[Health & Medicine](#), [Body](#)



Hepatitis is a disease characterized by inflammation of the liver. The prefix hepat is the medical term for liver just as the term cardio is the medical term for the heart. The suffix -itis means inflammation and has been known for its attachments to many prefixes that represent different parts of the body. For instance, tonsillitis means inflammation of the tonsils, arthritis means inflammation of the joints, and bronchitis means inflammation of the bronchi in the lungs. When a part of the body or organ system is inflamed it means that there is a swelling or enlargement. This usually leads to other problems such as fever, pain, or death if the issue remains untreated. Hepatitis is very complex because there are various forms of the disease and they are named for the viruses that cause them. This document will explain the causes of hepatitis as well as the symptoms, diagnosis and treatments available. Before discussing the causes and dangers of having an inflamed liver, it is necessary to understand the exact functions of the liver. “ The liver is responsible for filtering out from the bloodstream harmful substances such as dead cells, toxins, fats and an overabundance of hormones, and a yellowish substance called bilirubin that is a by-product of the breakdown of old red blood cells.” (Balch, CNC 479-482). If the liver is swollen or tender the functions become impaired and this can lead to an accumulation of toxins in the body. This is harmful because these toxins that can build up in the blood are circulated to other parts of the body as all blood cells circulate. The symptoms include, painful muscular and joint weakness, fever, vomiting, nausea, severe headache, dark urine, abdominal pain, light colored feces and jaundice. Jaundice is easy to detect from looking at a person no matter how dark their complexion may be. It is noticeable by yellowing of the finger

tips, lips, skin and white portion of the eyes. This is due to the build-up of bilirubin in the body. Bilirubin is a yellowish by-product of the healthy liver function of breaking down red blood cells that have become old. Jaundice is a key indicator of liver problems that doesn't require testing to diagnose.

There are several issues that can cause a person to suffer from a disease of the liver. There are viruses and toxins and they both can lead to terminal sickness. Some toxins that can cause liver disease include abused alcohol, chlorinated hydrocarbons and arsenic (if absorbed through the skin). The extent of the liver damage is determined by the amount of exposure to the toxins (Balch, CNC 479-482). The most frightening causes of hepatitis are also the most contagious. This is because of the viruses that can cause the terrifying liver diagnosis.

The three leading types of virally induced hepatitis are known as HAV (hepatitis A Virus), HBV and HCV. There are also a few less common types of hepatitis known as D, E and G. Again, because these are caused by viral infections, they range from moderately to highly contagious. Hepatitis A can cause acute liver disease and is even been referred to as "infectious hepatitis. In many cases it may only take a few months for the liver to heal with treatment. Ironically, this type of hepatitis can wreak havoc on the body without presenting itself with sudden symptoms. It can spread quickly through vectors such as shellfish consumed from polluted water, person to person contact with feces (or touching food after using the bathroom without thoroughly washing hands). It is usually after the appearance of jaundice or two to three weeks prior that the disease is most contagious.

Hepatitis B (also called HBV) infection is a serious global health problem,

with 2 billion people infected worldwide, and 350 million suffering from chronic HBV infection. “ The 10th leading cause of death worldwide, HBV infections result in 500 000 to 1. 2 million deaths per year caused by chronic hepatitis, cirrhosis, and hepatocellular carcinoma. The last accounts for 320 000 deaths per year” (Lavanchy 97-107). It can be passed onto a child from the mother during the birthing process. However, it can also be transmitted from contaminated needles, sexual activity and blood transfusions. If left untreated, a patient can go on to suffer from cirrhosis (hardening) of the liver or cancer. The good news is that if proper treatment is administered, 85% of people who have hepatitis B can survive and fully recover (Balch, CNC 479-482).

HCV is the most deadly form of the hepatitis and causes more than 10, 000 deaths annually. Millions of people suffer from chronic infection and it is easier to contract that Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. Despite such devastating statistics, more than 99% of people with HCV survive (Balch, CNC 479-482). This is not to imply that they do not need therapies, life changing nutritional regimens or medications to stay healthy, but having hepatitis C does not have to be a death sentence if treatment is available. In some cases, a liver transplant is necessary and some people can die waiting for a donor organ from a person whose blood type matches their own. Prior to 1992 there was a lack of blood testing before transfusions were administered in the United States. This lead to a tragic spread of HVC infected victims.

Vaccination programs have proven to be affective with preventing the spread of this disease. “ The implementation of mass immunization

programs, which have been recommended by the World Health Organization since 1991, have dramatically decreased the incidence of HBV infection among infants, children, and adolescents in many countries (Lavanchy 97-107). Treatments for hepatitis are as varied as the viruses that cause them. There have been substantial improvements in the success of HCV treatment. “ In randomized clinical trials, the highest overall SVR rates have been achieved with the combination of weekly subcutaneous injections of long-acting peginterferon alfa and oral ribavirin, which represents the current standard of care” (Strader, Wright, Thomas, and Seeff 1147-1171). While there are claims that antiviral treatments are the only way to decrease the death toll from severe hepatitis infections, it is important to keep in mind that there are natural remedies as well. Balch introduces a rainbow of supplements, herbs and nutritional regimens that are effective in treating hepatitis as well. One of the most impressive are 5, 000-10, 000 milligrams daily of Vitamin C with bioflavonoids as a powerful antiviral agent. There are 30 or more additional supplements and 13 herbs that are also recommended for treatment. One of the herbs is milk thistle. It contains silymarin that aids in healing and rebuilding the liver. Other herbs include (but are not limited to) phyllanthus, burdock and ligustrum. These natural alternatives should be administered under the care of a qualified physician who specializes in holistic therapies.

While it is nice to know that this disease is can be successfully treated. It is important to consider and discuss prevention as being the best medicine. In addition to thoroughly washing hands in the work place, avoiding contaminated waters or foods prepared near contaminated waters when

traveling is also very important. The more obvious measures of prevention include, avoiding shared needles, non-sterile tattoo equipment, unprotected sexual activity and poor safety precautions in the workplace. In conclusion, hepatitis is a scary, painful and devastating infection no matter which strain of the virus or toxin has caused the infection. The good news is that it is highly preventable with access to information and application of the wisdom that comes from knowledge about this disease. While there are many publications that boast successful treatments with drugs and hospitalization, it is worth considering the natural therapies that work to treat the multiple bodily systems including the causative agents of disease. Conventional medicine attempts to treat or alleviate the symptoms. However, there is more promise in raising the immune system, suppressing and destroying the virus and healing the entire body in addition to the liver.

References:

Balch, CNC, Phyllis A. . Prescription for Nutritional Healing . 4th. New York, New York: Penguin Group, 2006. 479-482. Print.

Lavanchy, D. " Hepatitis B virus epidemiology, disease burden, treatment, and current and emerging prevention and control measures." Journal of Viral Hepatitis. 11. 2 (2004): 97-107. Web. 15 Dec. 2013. Strader, D. B., T. Wright, D. L. Thomas, and L. B. Seeff. " Diagnosis, management, and treatment of hepatitis C." Hepatology. 39. 4 (2004): 1147-1171. Web. 15 Dec. 2013. .