

# *Hepatitis C virus infection in HIV-1 positive individuals from Slovenia*

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## SUMMARY

The incidence of infection by hepatitis C virus (HCV) is increased among HIV infected individuals, reflecting shared epidemiological risks. The aim of our study was to determine the prevalence of HCV infection among 136 HIV-1-positive individuals from Slovenia. The overall prevalence of HCV infection in HIV-positive individuals was 16.9%, which is among the lowest prevalence found in similar studies from other European countries. The prevalence of HIV and HCV co-infection was the highest in hemophiliacs and intravenous drug users. A significant difference in HCV infection prevalence between blood and sexual exposure risk groups was found (76% vs. 1.9% respectively,  $p < 0.01$ ).

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### *Introduction*

The co-infection by hepatitis C virus (HCV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is quite common, mainly due to some shared transmission routes. Previous studies placed the prevalence of HCV infection among HIV-positive individuals between 3-98% with the large variation primarily attributable to the population studied (1). Thus, the prevalence of HCV infection in those who acquired HIV infection by sexual transmission varies from 4-18%, and rises to nearly 100% in some hemophiliacs series (1, 2). The objective of our study was to determine the prevalence of HCV infection among HIV-1-positive individuals from Slovenia.

### *Materials and methods*

136 HIV-1-positive individuals (102 men, 34 women) from Slovenia were included in the study. They represented 80.9% of 168 HIV infected individuals who have been detected in Slovenia up to December 31, 2000 (91 AIDS cases, 77 anti-HIV positive individuals). They were distributed according to risk factors for HIV infection as follows: 69 (50.7%) homosexuality/bisexuality, 32 (23.5%) heterosexual high-risk behavior, 13 (9.6%) hemophilia, 11 (8.1%) intravenous drug use, 5 (3.7%) unknown, 4 (2.9%) vertical transmission, 1 (0.7%) human bite by an AIDS patient and 1 (0.7%) a combination of homosexuality and intravenous drug use.

## **K E Y W O R D S**

**HIV, HCV, co-infection, Slovenia, AIDS**

