

Long term follow-up of patients with chronic hepatitis due to hepatitis C virus

Seguimiento prolongado de pacientes con enfermedad hepática crónica por VHC.

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Thirty two patients (18 males whose ages ranged from 32 to 68 years old) with hepatitis C virus chronic hepatitis (positive anti-HCV by ELISA, confirmed by RIBA II) that were followed by the authors during 2 to 25 years, were retrospectively analyzed. Thirteen subjects had a history of blood transfusions, one had an accidental pinprick and other a sexual contact with a HCV positive individual; the transmission source was not identified in the resting 19 subjects. Only five individuals had an acute onset. The rest of the patients had few symptoms with moderate and fluctuating transaminase elevations. Liver biopsy at the onset showed a chronic hepatitis with moderate activity, even in 15 individuals with cirrhosis (47%). During follow up, six subjects deteriorated clinically, appearing liver failure and three of these died 4, 5 and 14 years after the disease appearance. No subject developed a hepatocarcinoma.