



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL
5100 LEBBURG PIKE
FALLS CHURCH VA 22041-3258

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DASG-HS

30 SEP 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDERS, MEDCOM REGIONAL MEDICAL
COMMANDS

SUBJECT: Hepatitis C Screening

1. Reference memorandum, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) , 16 Jun 99, Subject: Screening and Treatment Policy for Hepatitis C Virus.
2. The Assistant Secretary of Defense has directed a targeted risk-based testing program to screen soldiers for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) who are 35 years of age or older and are separating or retiring from service using the guidelines as described below.
3. RMCs will notify all Army medical treatment facilities of the following policy which is effective immediately. The policy will be included in the next update of AR 40-501, however this memorandum serves as the implementing instruction pending publication of AR 40-501.
4. Hepatitis Screening:
 - a. Soldiers age 35 or older who are separating or retiring from the Army and who request Hepatitis C screening will be tested at their request. If the test is positive, medical evaluation to confirm HCV infection, to determine the need for specific treatments, and to provide counseling on lifestyle modifications and steps to protect others from infection will be accomplished.
 - b. The statements contained in the attachment, "Hepatitis C Screening" will be overprinted on a DA Form 4700, administered and placed in the medical record for all soldiers age 35 and older who are separating or retiring from active duty.
5. POC is LTC Jeffrey Elting, DSN 761-3118.

Ronald R. Blanck

RONALD R. BLANCK
Lieutenant General
The Surgeon General



Hepatitis C Screening

The following statements will be overprinted on a DA Form 4700 and enclosed in the medical record of all soldiers age 35 or older who are separating or retiring from active duty. Soldiers will be instructed to read the statement and indicate in the space provided whether or not they want to be screened for Hepatitis C infection.

1. Hepatitis C is transmitted primarily by contaminated blood (e.g blood transfusions, contaminated needles, or sticks with contaminated sharp objects). The following are possible sources of hepatitis C infection (HCV). If you can answer "yes" or any of these risk factors you should receive a sample blood test to determine if you could have hepatitis C. If you consider yourself at risk, based on an exposure to a possible source of hepatitis C virus, you should have a simple blood test for HCV. You will not be asked to identify any specific risk factors to justify HCV testing. If the test is positive, you will receive a medical evaluation to confirm HCV infection, determine your need for specific treatments and be provided counseling on lifestyle modifications and steps to protect others from infection.

2. Risk Factors:

- a. Receiving a transfusion of blood or blood products before 1992.
- b. Ever injecting illegal drugs, including use once many years ago.
- c. Receiving clotting factor concentrates produced before 1987.
- d. Having chronic (long term) hemodialysis.
- e. Being told that you have persistent abnormal liver enzyme tests (alanine aminotransferase) or an unexplained liver disease.
- f. Receiving an organ transplant before July 1992.
- g. Having a needle stick, sharps or mucosal exposure to potentially HCV-infected blood as part of your occupational duties and not been previously evaluated for HCV infection.

3. If the test is positive, you will receive a medical evaluation to confirm HCV infection, determine your need for specific treatments, and be provided counseling on lifestyle modifications and steps to protect others from infection.

4. Circle yes or no to one of the following responses and sign and date.

a. No-- I do not want to be tested for hepatitis C.

b. Yes--I want to be tested for hepatitis C.

c. Signature _____ Date _____



HEALTH AFFAIRS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

JUN 16 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (RESERVE AFFAIRS)
SURGEON GENERAL OF THE ARMY
SURGEON GENERAL OF THE NAVY
SURGEON GENERAL OF THE AIR FORCE

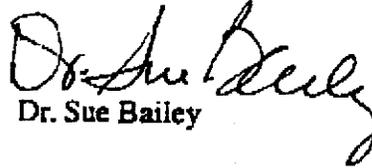
SUBJECT: Screening and Treatment Policy for Hepatitis C Virus

We recently completed a comprehensive study of hepatitis C virus (HCV) in the U.S. military. The study included seroprevalence and seroincidence on over 20,000 randomly selected serum samples from the DoD Serum Repository, an analysis of DoD hospital records of inpatient admissions for acute and chronic viral hepatitis during the last 20 years, a review of published studies related to this infectious disease, and a benefit analysis of different screening strategies. The results of this research are provided in the attached report to Congress. The data clearly demonstrate that military personnel are at low risk for HCV infection. The evidence does not support a requirement at this time to deviate from national screening policy on HCV as established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). However, we did find a higher prevalence of infection in our older service members. Therefore, I am directing implementation of a targeted risk-based testing program using the attached screening guidelines to screen individuals who are 35 years of age or older and are separating or retiring from service. The results of this screening and subsequent evaluation, counseling, and treatment shall be annotated in the service member's permanent medical record.

Our knowledge on HCV is changing rapidly. On August 10, 1998, I initiated formation of an Interagency Working Group on Hepatitis C Virus. The intent of the working group is to bring the separate agencies closer together and work toward development of appropriate strategies to both prevent new infections and minimize the impact of current HCV infections on our civilian and military populations. The working group is a forum to discuss issues related to hepatitis C of common interest to the various agencies and promote cooperation and collaboration regarding clinical and research initiatives. Each Service has a representative on this work group. A list of Service representatives is attached. These individuals will provide access to the most recent guidance on screening and treatment. The National Institutes of Health and CDC maintain Internet web sites containing current information on HCV. The site addresses are linked to the Military Health System Internet site or are available directly at <http://www.hepnet.com/nih/contents.html> or <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/c/index.htm>, respectively.

HAPOLICY 9900016

I will reevaluate the requirement for continued targeted risk-based screening and testing as we continue to monitor the natural history of HCV in our military population. My point of contact is LtCol James R. Riddle. USAF, BSC, who may be reached at (703) 681-1703, ext. 5211.


Dr. Sue Bailey

Attachments:
As stated