

Re: should I worry about hepatitis c?

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- *From:* greyhackles <greyhackles@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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On Sat, 04 Aug 2007 05:46:00 -0700, dacconverter <seagate1556@xxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

About 2 weeks ago, during a night-time shift, I was suturing up a deep wound on a patient. The patient was a male, and a chronic IV drug user. He was Hep C – positive, had liver enzymes drastically higher than normal, and had just started taking the meds for hep C treatment.

His wound at the time was bleeding heavily.

When suturing, I passed the suturing needle from one side of the wound to another with my fingers. I do remember having grabbed the sharp end of the needle in the middle of suturing and then stuck it into the other side of the wound. (all using my fingers instead of a hemostat)

I wasn't injured (at least not to my knowledge; maybe I was stuck "microscopically" ?) in the process. I didn't bleed and gloves were not visibly punctured, although I remember grabbing the suturing needle by its sharp tips. It was a pretty stupid thing to do.

Is this an occupational exposure? Should I worry about having contracted Hep C ?

Of course "it" would be classified as an occupational exposure – assuming you weren't moonlighting at the time ;-)

The real question is: what exactly is "it".

If you didn't puncture your glove, "it" is nothing.

If you **did** puncture your glove – microscopically or otherwise – "it" could still be nothing, but "it" could also be something, and you won't know which "it" is until you get an HCV antibody test.

Bottom line: after four weeks from the incident, get an HCV antibody test,

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regardless of what you think actually happened. It usually takes a few weeks for antibodies to be expressed in sufficient quantity to register a positive result, so testing too early may provide a false-negative result.

With any luck, "it" will turn out to truly be nothing.

Cheers

/greyhackles

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