

## Assessing Psycho-Social Stressors for Chronically Infected Hepatitis C Virus Patients in Egypt

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**Abstract :** People with hepatitis C are likely to experience psychological distress related to adjustment issues following diagnosis. Objective: The study was conducted to determine the psycho-social stressors accompanying Hepatitis C virus (HCV) chronic infection. The study focused on immediate and later on reactions to being diagnosed as infected HCV patients. Effect of HCV on disruption of patients' relationships in term of family relationship and friendship, employment and financial status was assessed. The magnitude and causes of the social stigma and its relation to awareness about illness, level of education were also assessed. Methods: During this study the subjective experiences of people having HCV was explored through a designed questionnaire targeted 540 cases; 359 males and 181 females from ten out of 21 National Treatment Reference Centers of National Hepatology and Tropical Medicine Research Institutes of Ministry of Health (MOH) hospitals. The study was conducted along a period of six months from September 2011 to March 2012. Results: The study revealed that the financial problems are the commonest problems faced by 75.5 % of the cases. More than 70% of the cases suffered from immediate sadness versus 67.4% suffered from worry. Social stigma was reported by 13 % of HCV +patients, the majority of which were females. Conclusions: Exploring the psychosocial consequences of HCV infection can act as pressing motivators for behavior change needed for limiting HCV endemicity in Egypt.

**Keywords :** Egypt, HCV infection, psycho-social adjustment, stigma

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