

The light for Chronic Hepatitis B

Of 40 million global hepatitis B carriers, Chinese take up three quarters of the population. Hepatitis B is also prevalent in Hong Kong, having one carrier in every ten people toll. Hepatitis B virus increases chances of cirrhosis and liver cancer which is the second most common cancer in the territory.

Hepatitis B could be easily transmitted through blood contact, during delivery and sexual intercourse. Sharing needles, shaver or toothbrush while piercing, getting a tattoo or acupuncture might also catch the virus. People should have a blood test when there are any signs of fatigue, loss of appetite, jaundice or rash. A balanced diet, more exercises, enough sleep, plus less alcohol intake will be beneficial.

Researchers for Faculty of Medicine, the University of Hong Kong found that by taking peginterferon alfa-2a, patients developed less viral resistance and showed less re-bounce effect, as compared with lamivudine.

Pegylated interferon alfa-2a is yet to be a perfect treatment. Patients taking pegylated interferon alfa-2a might suffer from flu-like symptoms, including fever, fatigue or headache, which is usually transient. One fifth of the hepatitis patients showed depressive symptoms. Patients who have bone marrow diseases, serious allergy and impaired liver functions cannot adopt the pegylated interferon alpha-2a treatment. The new treatment works best with younger and motivated patients.