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Revolutionizing Treatment Outcomes in Hepatitis C: Managed Care Implications and Considerations

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Revolutionizing Treatment Outcomes in Hepatitis C: Managed Care Implications and Considerations

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Intended Audience

Managed care clinicians and administrators, including physicians, pharmacists, medical and formulary directors, and other managed care professionals involved in the care of patients with hepatitis C infection.

Activity Overview

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is a serious public health concern that affects an estimated 4 million individuals in the United States and 185 million worldwide and is linked to substantial clinical, economic, and societal burdens. Approximately 80% of patients with acute HCV infection progress to chronic infection; possible sequelae of chronic HCV infection include cirrhosis, hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), and/or decompensated liver disease. The treatment paradigm and clinical outlook for HCV infection has shifted rapidly in the past few years and continues to evolve, with the introduction of recently approved agents and novel therapies, many drugs in the development pipeline, and the release of updated guidelines. Based on these factors, HCV has reinforced its position as a major contributor to rising healthcare costs in the United States and a focal point for specialty pharmacy and managed care. This supplement to *The American Journal of Managed Care* will provide an epidemiological and clinical overview of HCV, discuss current and emerging pharmacotherapeutic strategies for the disease, evaluate the burdens of HCV infection, and examine the new and evolving standards of care from a managed care perspective.

Statement of Educational Need

Approximately 4 million individuals in the United States and 185 million worldwide are affected by HCV infection, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 75% of infected persons remain unaware of their infection status, mainly due to the asymptomatic and insidious nature of the disease course. As such, the appropriate diagnosis and management of HCV continue to be challenges. The goal of treatment remains focused on achieving sustained virologic response (SVR), which has been linked to significant reductions in the morbidity and mortality associated with HCV and its complications, including cirrhosis, HCC, hepatic decompensation, and end-stage liver disease. Treatment decisions for HCV are often complicated by a high incidence of adverse effects, treatment resistance, and issues with adherence to therapy, which often result in discontinuation, the non-achievement of SVR, and poor overall outcomes. Fortunately, the treatment paradigm and clinical outlook for patients with HCV infection has shifted rapidly in the past few years and continues to evolve, with the introduction of recently approved agents and novel therapies capable of achieving SVR, many drugs in the development pipeline, and the release of updated guidelines. It is hoped that recent therapeutic advances can help mitigate the tremendous clinical and social burdens

associated with the disease. However, such therapeutic advances have also fortified HCV's position as a major contributor to rising healthcare costs in the United States and a focal point for specialty pharmacy and managed care. In this exciting and dynamic healthcare landscape, both clinicians and managed care professionals are tasked with balancing the effective treatment of this complex disease with the implementation of appropriate managed care strategies in an effort to improve patient outcomes and reduce healthcare expenditures. A comprehensive understanding of today's pharmacotherapeutic strategies and the clinical and managed care facets of HCV is vital to achieving this delicate balance.

Educational Objectives

Upon completion of this activity, participants should be able to:

- Discuss the importance of early assessment of high risk patients and early treatment rationale
- Distinguish new and emerging HCV agents and treatment algorithms and their clinical benefits in individualized patient management
- Outline the implications of evolving guideline recommendations in diagnosis and treatment on managed care practice
- Identify the cost implications of new and emerging therapies for HCV versus the costs of disease and standard therapies in order to better individualize therapy selection and patient management

Physician Credit

Accreditation Statement


This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint providership of the University of Cincinnati and Pharmacy Times Office of Continuing Professional Education. The University of Cincinnati is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

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Participants must read the article, complete the online posttest achieving a passing score of 70% or higher, and complete an online evaluation and request for credit. Detailed instructions on obtaining CE/CME credit are included at the end of this activity.

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Revolutionizing Treatment Outcomes in Hepatitis C: Managed Care Implications and Considerations

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■ Faculty

Yekaterina Opsha, PharmD, BCPS

Clinical Assistant Professor
Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Piscataway, New Jersey

Clinical Specialist, Cardiovascular Medicine
Saint Barnabas Medical Center
Livingston, New Jersey

Gary M. Owens, MD

President
Gary Owens Associates
Ocean View, Delaware

Monica Shah, PharmD

Antimicrobial Stewardship Clinical Pharmacist
Pharmacy Department
Monmouth Medical Center
Long Branch, New Jersey

Zobair M. Younossi, MD, MPH, FACG, FACP, AGAF, FAASLD

Betty and Guy Beatty Center for Integrated Research
Liver and Obesity Research Center
Chairman
Department of Medicine
Vice President for Research
Inova Health System
Falls Church, Virginia

■ Editorial Support

Angela K. Kuehl, PharmD, MS

Hitt Medical Writing, LLC
Alpharetta, Georgia

■ Faculty Disclosures

Yekaterina Opsha, PharmD, BCPS, has no relevant financial relationships with commercial interests to disclose.

Gary M. Owens, MD, has disclosed the following relevant commercial financial relationships or affiliations in the past 12 months:

Consultant:

AbbVie, Janssen, Towers Watson

Monica Shah, PharmD, has no relevant financial relationships with commercial interests to disclose.

■ PARTICIPATING FACULTY ■

Zobair M. Younossi, MD, MPH, FACP, AGAF, FAASLD, has disclosed the following relevant commercial financial relationships or affiliations in the past 12 months:

Consultant:

AbbVie, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Enterome, GlaxoSmithKline, Gilead Sciences, Intercept, Salix

Advisory board member:

Janssen, Salix, Vertex

■ Editorial Support

Angela K. Kuehl, PharmD, MS, has no relevant commercial financial relationships or affiliations to disclose.

The American Journal of Managed Care

Publishing Staff—Jeff D. Prescott, PharmD, RPh, and Ida Delmendo have no relevant financial relationships with commercial interests to disclose.

University of Cincinnati

Planning Staff—Susan P. Tyler, MEd, CMP, CCMEP, Director, University of Cincinnati, has nothing to disclose.

CME Physician Reviewer—Rick Ricer, MD, University of Cincinnati, has nothing to disclose.

Pharmacy Times Office of Continuing Professional Education

Planning staff—David Heckard; Steve Lin, PharmD, RPh; Donna Fausak; and Nathalie Harden have no relevant financial relationships with commercial interests to disclose.

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- V. Be up-to-date, reflecting the current (as of date of publication) standard of care.
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