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**Combined Treatment with Interferon Alpha and Ribavirin  
for Chronic Hepatitis C in Patients with Previous  
Non-response or Relapse to Interferon Alone**

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**Background/Aims:** Interferon-alpha has been effective in 10-20% of treated patients with chronic hepatitis C (CH-C) on a long term basis. We conducted this study to evaluate the biochemical and virological outcomes of combined treatment with interferon alpha and ribavirin for the patients who had CH-C but showed non-response or relapse to interferon alpha alone. **Methods:** Twenty five patients with CH-C who had not responded or relapsed to interferon alpha alone treatment were enrolled. Eighteen patients were given by the combined treatment of interferon alpha and ribavirin and 7 patients were not given any specific treatment as control. Interferon alpha-2a was given subcutaneously, at a dose of 4.5 MU thrice weekly. Ribavirin was also given orally, at a dose of 900 mg/day for 24 weeks. We quantified serum HCV-RNA levels at the end of treatment. **Results:** The normalization rate of serum ALT at the end of treatment was 47.1% (8/17) in treated group and 14.3% (1/7) in control group and negative conversion of HCV-RNA was noted in all patients. In the treated group, 75% (6/8) of responders at the end of treatment sustained serum ALT level normally during 24 weeks follow-up, but none has responded persistently in the control group. **Conclusions** The combined treatment with interferon alpha and ribavirin is effective and safe for treating chronic

hepatitis C in patients who showed non-response or relapse to interferon alone. (Kor J Gastroenterol 1999;33:232 - 239)

**Key Words:** Chronic C viral hepatitis, Interferon alpha, Ribavirin, Non-response and relapse

1. C 3 6 (Intermax<sup>®</sup>, LG ) 3 , 가 20 ALT 6 5 RNA (HCV-RNA) 18 450 (Roferon-<sup>®</sup>, Roche Co.) 3 24 900 mg ALT 가 25.0% .1 가 , 24 Table 1

2. nucleoside analogue , , 6 가 C -70 nucleoside analogue nested-RT PCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction) HCV-RNA RNA AMV reverse transcriptase cDNA

**Table 1.** Subject Characteristics of Treated and Control Group

	Treated	Control
Male/Female	14/4	4/3
Age (years)*	47.0 ± 11.1	34.6 ± 8.9
ALT (IU/L)*	155.1 ± 72.1	87.7 ± 66.9
HCV RNA titer* (105 copies/mL)	2.5 ± 2.6	NC †
Previous Treatment response (NR/RE)‡	13/5	7/10

\*, Mean ± SD; †, not checked; ‡, NR-Non response/RE-Relapse.

**Fig. 1.** Change of mean serum ALT in treated and control group. SR; sustained response; RE, relapse; NR, non-response.

5'-untranslated region  
 2 nested PCR  
 260 base pair  
 HCV-RNA  
 copy number quantitation standard  
 RT-PCR colorimetric micro-  
 well plate detection HCV-RNA  
 Amplicor™ HCV Monitor test (Roche Diagnostic  
 System, Branchburg, NJ, USA)  
 HCV-RNA

1. ALT  
 18 1 3  
 17  
 ALT 가  
 8 (47.1%)  
 12 5  
 5 3  
 ALT 가  
 7 1 (14.3%)  
 ALT 가  
 ALT  
 6  
 6 ALT 가  
 ALT

**Fig. 2.** Biochemical and virological response in treated and control group. ETR, response at end of treatment; SR, sustained response.

ALT 가  
 8 6 (75.0%) 1  
 ALT 가  
 1 5 6  
 ALT 가  
 ALT 가 1 6  
 ALT 가  
 2. HCV-RNA  
 17 ALT 가 8  
 nested-RT PCR  
 HCV-RNA가  
 HCV-RNA 85,000-480,000 copies/mL  
 24.6-40.6 copies/mL  
 HCV-RNA 70,000-790,000 copies/mL

**Table 2.** Characteristics of the Patients according to Response at End of Treatment

	Response (n=8)	Non-response (n=9)
Male/Female	6/2	7/2
Age (years)*	44.4 ± 12.5	48.0 ± 10.1
ALT (IU/L)*	146.6 ± 63.9	172.6 ± 77.8
HCV RNA titer (105 copies/mL)	2.1 ± 1.5	3.6 ± 3.6
Previous treatment response (NR/RE) †	5/3	7/2

\*, Mean ± SD; †, NR-Non response/RE-Relapse.

**Table 3.** Characteristics of the Patients according to Sustained Response

	Sustained response (n=6)	Relapse (n=2)
Male/Female	5/1	1/1
Age (years)	41.2 ± 12.8	54.0 ± 4.2
ALT (IU/L)	152.3 ± 74.1	129.5 ± 20.5
HCV RNA titer (105 copies/mL)	1.3 ± 3.9	3.7 ± 1.5
Previous treatment response (NR/RE)	3/3	2/0
HCV RNA titer at ET* (105 copies/mL)	34.5 ± 7.6	30.5 ± 0.4

\*, end of treatment.

**Fig. 3.** Change of HCV-RNA titer in treated group before and after treatment. SR, sustained response; RE, relapse; NR, non-response.

28.5-830,000 copies/mL

(Fig. 2, 3).

3.

HCV-RNA

(Table 2),

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HCV-RNA

HCV-RNA 1.3 ± 3.9 × 10<sup>5</sup> copies/mL

3.7 ± 1.5 × 10<sup>5</sup> copies/mL

(Table 3).

ALT ,

4. ALT 40%, HCV-RNA  
30% 2 , 3  
8 가 (7 12 24  
), (5 ), (4 ), (2 ), ALT 45.5%  
(1 ) , 6  
(Hb<12g/dL) 5 36.4% 3  
(39.4%) (WBC<3,000/  
ul) 4 , (platelet<105/ul) 3  
. 가 .  
가 . ,  
C 80% 가  
20% .47  
. C  
C 가  
가 C 가 ( )  
가 C 가 , 60%  
3 6 .3 10%  
.47 2  
12 75-85%  
40-50% ALT ALT 가 30-40%  
가 30-40% HCV-RNA가 ALT 가  
. 50% .47  
6 ALT 가  
15-20%,  
HCV-RNA가 10-20% guanosine analogue  
. C DNA RNA  
3 6  
3 24  
ALT 50%, HCV-RNA RNA-dependent RNA polymerase ino-  
35.7% , 6 sine monophosphate dehydrogenase  
ALT 가 guanosine-triphosphate  
25.0% .1 3 6  
6 12 .8  
ALT 63.0%, C  
HCV-RNA 56.7% , Reichard 9

가 ALT 가 , , ALT HCV-RNA  
 RNA .810 2.1 ± 1.5 × 10<sup>5</sup> copies/mL  
 3.6 ± 3.6 × 10<sup>5</sup> copies/mL 가  
 11-15가 . 3 24  
 800-1,200 mg meta- analysis  
 62% 가가 .  
 ALT 가 42% HCV-RNA가  
 6 21%  
 HCV-RNA , 60% 가 가 .  
 HCV-RNA 5  
 가  
 41.6% 60%  
 ALT 가 HCV-RNA  
 25% 60% ALT 가  
 가 . 가 .  
 : C 25%  
 가 17가  
 .  
 18가  
 가 nucleoside  
 analogue  
 HCV-RNA :  
 C 3 6  
 Simmonds 1b 3 , 12  
 가 가 20 6  
 .19 5 . 18  
 450 3  
 , 가 24 , 900  
 mg 24 . 7  
 . Brillanti 12 C , 6  
 .  
 Amplicor™ HCV Monitor test

HCV-RNA  
 ALT 가 8 (47.1%)  
 7 1 (14.3%)  
 ALT 가 8  
 HCV-RNA가  
 6 6  
 ALT 가  
 ALT  
 가  
 , , ALT ,  
 HCV-RNA  
 HCV-RNA  
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 가  
 가

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 1996;51(suppl 1):174.
2. , , , , .  
 C Interferon-alpha  
 1996;51:168-177.
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