

Lay Management of Chronic Disease: A Qualitative Study of Living with Hepatitis C Infection

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Objectives: To examine management strategies and goals reported by people diagnosed with chronic hepatitis C. **Methods:** We analyzed data from semistructured interviews (N=42) and from electronic sources [illness narratives (N=79) and Internet threaded discussions (N=264)]. Line-by-line coding, comparisons, and team discussions generated catalogs of lay management strategies and goals. We analyzed code-based files to identify informants' selection of specific strategies for each goal. **Results:** We classified lay manage-

ment strategies into 3 categories: medical self-care, behavior change, and coping. These strategies were used selectively in addressing multiple goals, categorized as fighting the virus, strengthening the body, and managing consequences. **Conclusions:** Results underscore the diversity of strategies for living with a disease characterized by uncertain prognosis and variable expression of symptoms.

Key words: self-care, lay management, hepatitis C

Am J Health Behav. 2009;33(4):376-390
