BACKGROUND

A report about the HCV patients in Italy published by Ultrasound Attiva and Epai, (two of the main HCV patients associations) shows that Italian regions are significantly different in terms of structures and treatments for these kind of patients.

The introduction of new therapies increased these differences in terms of access to new drugs. The number of centers in the main Italian Regions (in two Regions equivalent in terms of population like Lombardy and Sicily, for example, there is a substantial difference in terms of centers per million inhabitants: 3,50 centers per million inhabitants in Lombardy and 2,20 centers per million inhabitants in Sicily).

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to give an overview of the treatments available for the patients with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through the segmentation of HCV patients in Italy.

METHODS

The study was carried out in 17 Hepatology centers, treating HCV patients in 9 Italian Regions. The structures selected contribute a representative sample of the Italian scenario, being Centers of Excellence in HCV management in northern, southern, and center of Italy (representing approximately 34% of the 2.000 patients treated with first generation therapy).

The centers examined treat about 1.227 patients, 706 of whom transplanted (Table 2). In 2013 they treated about 800 patients treated with double therapy and 473 with triple therapy.

RESULTS

The percentage of patients treated in 2013 is significantly variable among the Regions investigated: it goes from the 68% of the number of HCV patients in the north to 34% of patients treated in the center or in Sicily.

The number of centers in the main Italian Regions (in two Regions equivalent in terms of population like Lombardy and Sicily, for example, there is a substantial difference in terms of centers per million inhabitants: 3,50 centers per million inhabitants in Lombardy and 2,20 centers per million inhabitants in Sicily).

On the contrary, at regional level many differences were found in all of the three parameters examined. In the structure investigated in Campania, for example, 72% of patients receive TT and 76% are experienced, while in Lazio 70% of patients receive DT and 72% are naive. Furthermore, considering the fibrosis stage, the 45% of patients treated in a center operating in Bari is in the range F0-F1, whilst in the center in Milan the 54% of the HCV patients treated is in stage F2-F4.

CONCLUSIONS

The study demonstrates that, concerning the treatment of HCV patients, there are significant differences among the Hepatology centers, both in terms of patients’ health status and therapy pathways. Further studies, at national level, about the therapies and patients management could help the Regions and the prescribing centers in dealing with this pathology and its problems.