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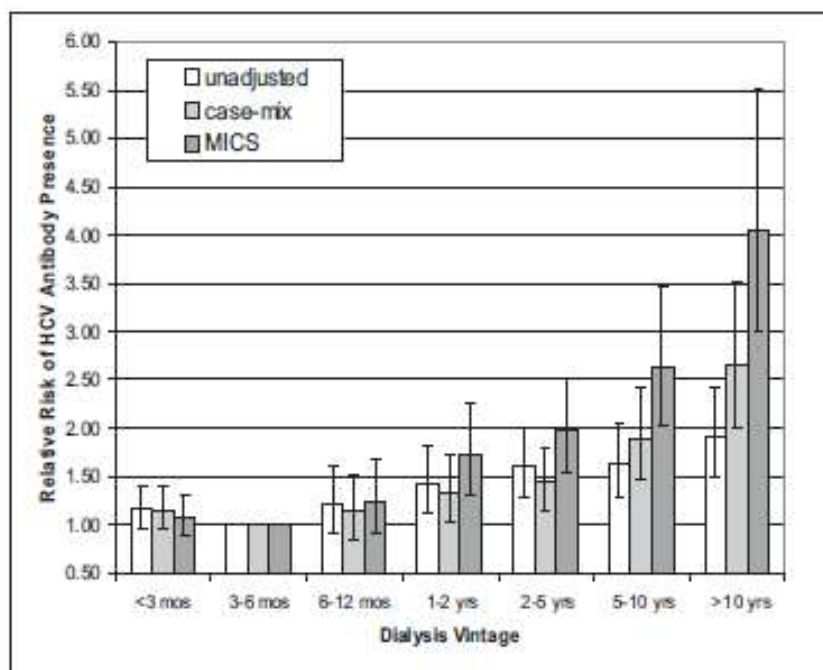
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DIALYSIS VINTAGE AND RISK OF HEPATITIS C VIRUS INFECTION.

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Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is common in maintenance hemodialysis (MHD) patients. We hypothesized that HCV infection is associated with selective clinical and laboratory characteristics and, in particular, longer dialysis vintage in MHD patients. We analyzed a national database of over 82,958 MHD patients, 13,664 of whom underwent HCV enzyme immunoassay (EIA) testing at least once over a 3 year interval (7/2001-6/2004). The HCV EIA was reported positive in 1,590 MHD patients (12%). In a multivariate logistic regression models that adjust for case-mix and available surrogates of malnutrition and inflammation, the predictors of HCV infection were younger age, male gender, African American race, Hispanic ethnicity, Medicaid insurance,

longer dialysis vintage time, unmarried status, HIV disease, and history of smoking. In particular, an increased HCV risk was observed across longer vintage intervals (Figure).



Hence, HCV infection, as diagnosed by EIA, has distinct demographic, clinical and laboratory predilections in MHD patients and is associated with longer time on dialysis. More diligent HCV detection and treatment may improve cardiovascular survival in MHD patients.