

Mortality of HCV Infected People Who Inject Drugs in Limburg: a 20-year Follow-up study

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People who inject drugs (PWID) have high mortality rates
Hepatitis C viral infection (HCV) is a **silent** disease

Gradually leads to fibrosis and cirrhosis over many years
Mortality due to HCC and end stage liver disease after more than two decades

Aim: to study the association between HCV infection and mortality in PWID in Limburg, Belgium

Retrospective data collection of **635** PWID registered at center for alcohol and drug abuse (CAD) in Limburg, Belgium

228 clients with missing HCV status

407 clients included in trial

Data collection:

Patient files at CAD Limburg

Patient files of referral hospitals for hepatology

Structured telephone calls with general physicians

Table 1: basic characteristics

	HCV RNA + PWID N= 121	HCV RNA - PWID N=286	p-value
Age (mean ± SD)	46y ± 8	44y ± 9	0.004
Gender (male)	105/121 (86.6%)	220/286 (76.9%)	0.023
Nationality			
- Western Europe	79/120 (65.8%)	227/285 (79.6%)	0.003
- Mediterranean	31/120 (25.8%)	48/285 (16.8%)	0.037
- Eastern Europe	9/120 (7.5%)	8/285 (2.8%)	0.032
- United States	-	1/285 (0.4%)	0.516
- Middle/Far-east	1/120 (0.8%)	1/285 (0.4%)	0.527
Housing:			
- House	46/73 (63.0%)	111/160 (69.4%)	0.337
- Family/friends	10/73 (13.7%)	38/160 (23.8%)	0.078
- Prison	4/73 (5.5%)	2/160 (1.3%)	0.059
- Institution	6/73 (8.2%)	1/160 (0.6%)	0.002
- None	7/73 (9.6%)	8/160 (5.0%)	0.186
Income:			
- Welfare	19/113 (16.8%)	52/280 (18.6%)	0.682
- Work	81/113 (71.7%)	205/280 (73.2%)	0.757
- Retirement	1/113 (0.9%)	2/280 (0.7%)	0.860
- None	12/113 (10.6%)	21/280 (7.5%)	0.313
Health Insurance	108/114 (94.7%)	271/282 (96.1%)	0.545
OST			
- Methadone	104/114 (91.2%)	243/275 (88.4%)	0.407
- Suboxone	8/114 (7.0%)	22/275 (8.0%)	0.741
- None	2/114 (1.8%)	10/275 (3.6%)	0.329
Age first contact OST center (mean ± SD)	33y ± 8	31y ± 8	0.028
Duration of follow-up (mean ± SD)	10y ± 7	10y ± 6	0.651
Diabetes	2/70 (2.9%)	3/158 (1.9%)	0.649
COPD	16/61 (26.2%)	37/126 (29.4%)	0.656
Psychiatric history	62/111 (55.9%)	151/272 (54.9%)	0.866

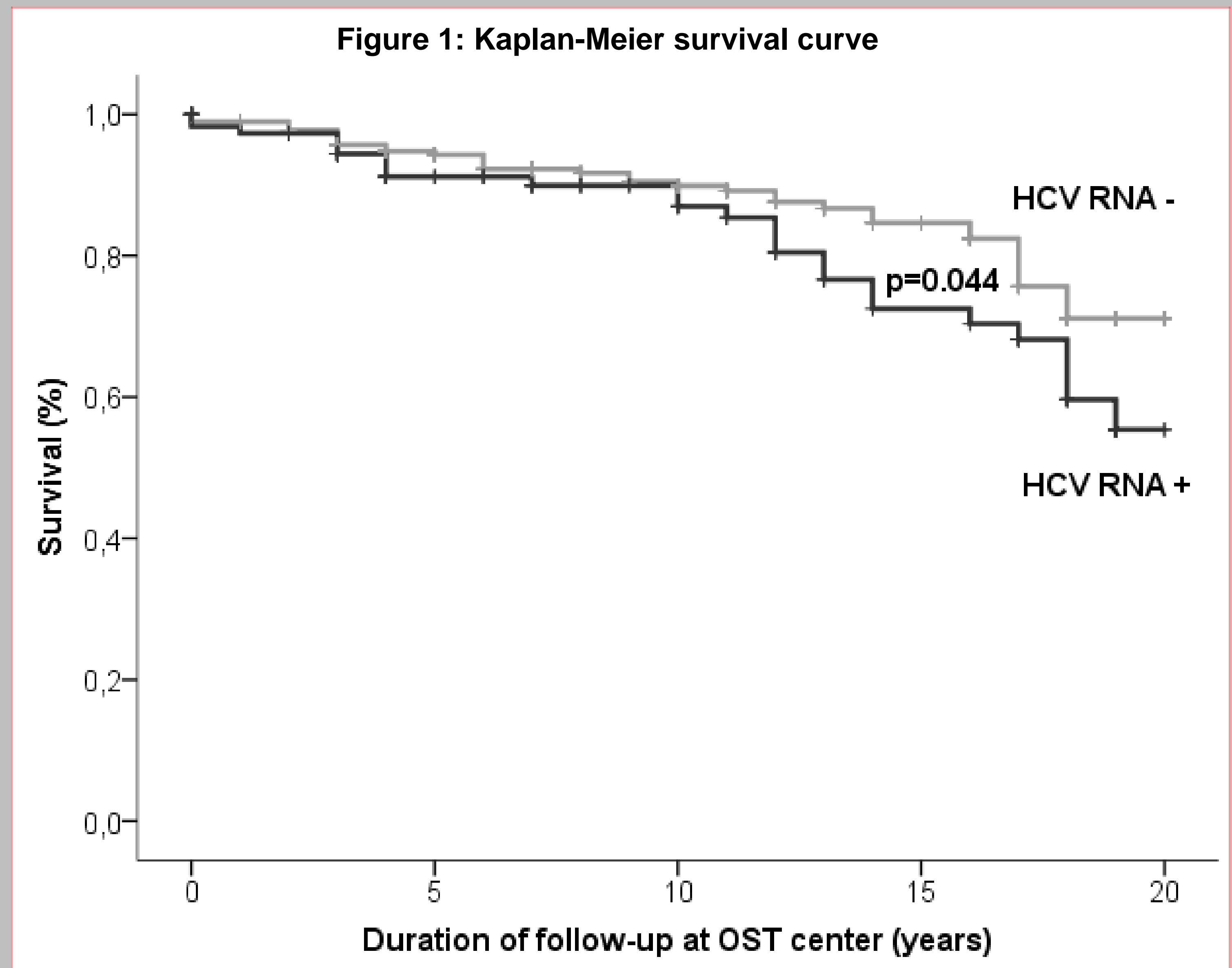
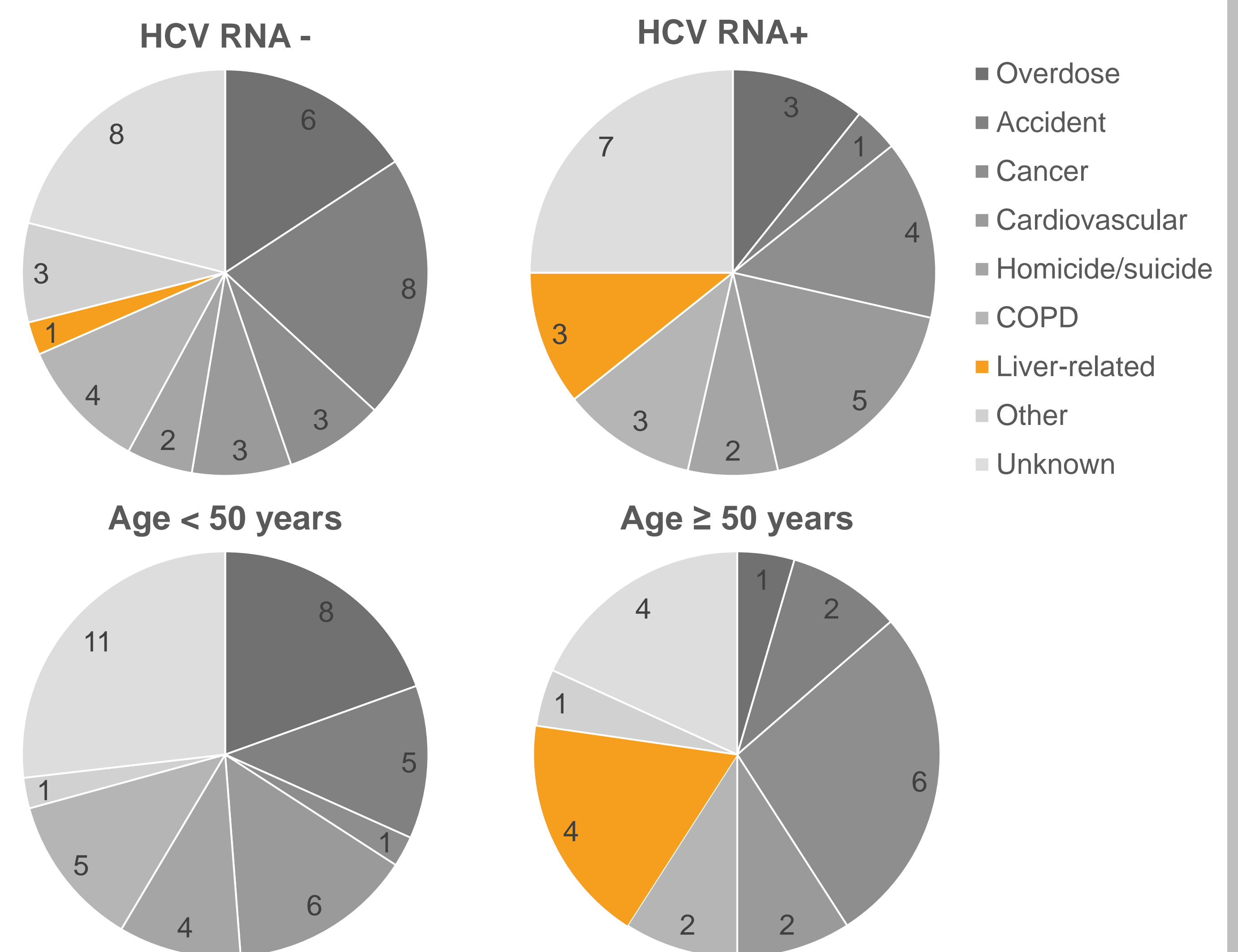


Table 2: characteristics of substance abuse

	HCV RNA + PWID N=121	HCV RNA - PWID N=286	p-value
Active use			
- Heroin	96/110 (87.3%)	261/278 (93.9%)	0.030
- Cocaine	40/110 (36.4%)	114/277 (41.2%)	0.385
- Methamphetamine	21/110 (19.1%)	69/277 (24.9%)	0.222
- Other	53/110 (48.2%)	164/278 (59.0%)	0.053
Active IV use	32/101 (31.7%)	82/240 (34.2%)	0.657
Age first drug use (mean ± SD)	17y ± 5	17y ± 4	0.400
Sharing needles	57/86 (66.3%)	114/194 (58.8%)	0.234
Alcohol abuse			
- Active	53/93 (57.0%)	106/212 (50.0%)	0.261
- Former	2/93 (2.2%)	3/212 (1.4%)	0.641
- None	38/93 (40.9%)	103/212 (48.6%)	0.213
Smoking			
- Active	91/92 (98.9%)	196/206 (95.1%)	0.111
- Former	1/92 (1.1%)	4/206 (1.9%)	0.178
- None	-	6/206 (2.9%)	0.336

Figure 2: causes of mortality according to HCV RNA status and age



Conclusion:

HCV RNA positive PWID had a significantly **higher mortality rate**. The difference only appeared after more than a decade of follow-up. Decompensated cirrhosis and HCC became causes of death after the age of 50 years.