

Hepatitis in Middle East

Hepatitis C virus infection in hemodialysis patients in Jordan

Saudi Med J. 2003; 24 Suppl 2:S137

Said RA, Hamzeh YY, Mehyar NS, Rababah MS , Jordan University, Aman

To evaluate the prevalence of hepatitis C virus infection in our hemodialysis population, we carried out a survey of 273 adult hemodialysis patients in 3 hemodialysis units in Jordan using a second generation rapid enzyme immunoassay. Sixty-seven patients were seropositive with a prevalence of 24.5%. All patients were transfusion dependent except 2. More than 85% of the patients have been on hemodialysis for more than 2 years. Co-infection with hepatitis B virus was observed in 6 patients. Abnormal liver functions were seen in 5 patients, but liver biopsies were not carried out. The prevalence of hepatitis C antibody in healthy blood donors in Jordan is 1.7%. We conclude that HCV infection prevalence in hemodialysis patients in Jordan is 24.5%, a percentage similar to what has been reported around the world and in the neighboring countries.

Determination of serum hepatitis B virus DNA in chronic HBsAg carriers: Clinical significance and correlation with serological markers

The Turkish Journal of Gastroenterology 2003; 14, No 3: 157-163

Kendal YALÇIN, Halil DEĞERTEKİN, M. Nail ALP, Selahattin TEKEŞ, Ömer SATICI,
Turgay BUDAK

**Dicle University, School of Medicine, Division of Hepatology, Internal Medicine, Medical
Biology and Genetics, Biostatistics, Diyarbakır**

Background/aims: Hepatitis B virus infection is among the most devastating health problems in the world, including Turkey. In this cross-sectional study, we aimed to investigate the correlations between hepatitis B virus genomic load and various measures of the progression of chronic hepatitis B virus infection. **Methods:** A total of 354 chronic HBsAg carriers [126 inactive HBsAg carriers, 50 asymptomatic replicative carriers (immune tolerant patients), 90 chronic hepatitis B patients and 88 patients with liver cirrhosis] were enrolled into the study. Eligible patients included males and females, 14-62 years of age, with detectable serum HBsAg, HBeAg or anti-HBe in serum at the time of screening and for at least six months before study entry. Serum hepatitis B virus DNA was detected by liquid hybridization, and results under the level of 1 pg/ml were additionally confirmed by polymerase chain reaction. **Results:** Of 354 patients, 118 (33%) were HBeAg-positive and 236 (67%) HBeAg-negative. Of HBeAg-negative patients, 126 (53%) had normal alanine aminotransferase, 31 (13%) had elevated alanine aminotransferase (chronic hepatitis B) and 79 (33%) had evidence of cirrhosis; corresponding figures in the HBeAg-positive patients were 50 (42%), 59 (50%) and 9 (8%). There is a significant correlation between transaminase values and histological liver damage, whereas no correlation was found between viral replication and liver damage. **Conclusions:** Hepatitis B virus DNA is an important and specific marker for ongoing hepatitis B virus related liver disease, but alanine aninotransferase was shown to be the best marker for liver inflammation and not hepatitis B virus viral load. Although these findings are not new, they are of some utility since they prevent unnecessary and cost-intensive viral load determinations in chronic HBsAg carriers.