Archives of Clinical Infectious Diseases
Volume 20 · Issue 5 · e162680

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Seroepidemiology of Hepatitis A and Hepatitis E Infections in Ardabil, Northwest of Iran: A Cross-sectional Population Based Study

Taymaz Shirinzadeh, Shahram Habibzadeh, Shayan Hamdollahzadeh, Shadmehr Vahedizadeh, Farhad Pourfarzi, Mohammad Mehrtak, Saeed Bidar, Samaneh Zeinali, Chiman Karami

SUBMITTED	REVISED	ACCEPTED	DOI
11 May 2025	7 Jul 2025	17 Jul 2025	10.5812/archcid-162680

About this report

This open peer review (OPR) report shows the public comments made on this article during peer review, by the reviewers, the associate editor and the editor-in-chief, for every revision round, together with the authors' replies. Comments appear only with the consent of the people who wrote them. Reviewers who chose to sign their report are named; the others are shown as "Referee". Comments are edited for language only, and confidential remarks to the editors are not included.

More about open peer review: brieflands.com/knowledgebase/opr

Contents

1 **Original submission** Referee 1, Shahnaz Sali, Associate Editor, Editor-in-Chief 2
2 **Revision 1** Referee 1, Shahnaz Sali, Editor-in-Chief 4
Authors' reply to reviewers 5
Reviewer and editor comments 8

1 Original submission

4 comments · 15 May 2025 – 27 May 2025

Referee 1 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 15 May 2025

Dear Authors,
Thank you for submitting your manuscript on the seroprevalence of hepatitis A and E in Ardabil, Iran. Your study provides valuable epidemiological data on these important infections. Below are my specific recommendations to improve your manuscript:
1. Abstract:
• Replace all instances of "questionnaire" with "checklist" (Line 14 and throughout the main text)
• The conclusion should focus on your key findings rather than vaccination recommendations, which were not studied
2. Methods:
• Clearly state inclusion/exclusion criteria for participants
• Justify your sampling approach:
o Explain why gastroenterology clinic patients were used rather than general population sampling
o Address potential selection bias from studying these patients
3. Results:
• Present all hepatitis E findings in tables (currently some are missing)
• Include both descriptive statistics and inferential testing:
o Add missing p-values for group comparisons
o Report effect sizes where appropriate
• Highlight statistically significant findings with clear interpretations:
o "The higher seroprevalence in older adults (X% vs Y%, p=0.XX) suggests..."
o "No significant difference by gender (p=0.XX) indicates..."
4. Discussion:
• Add a "Limitations" paragraph addressing:
o Potential selection bias in sampling
o Temporal aspects (single timepoint study)
o Unmeasured confounders (e.g., socioeconomic factors)
• Strengthen the interpretation by:
o Comparing your rates with those in other Iranian regions
o Discussing implications for public health interventions
5. Language/Formatting:
• Ensure consistent terminology throughout
• Verify all statistical reporting follows journal guidelines
• Consider professional editing for clarity
These revisions will enhance the manuscript's scientific rigor and readability. I appreciate your contribution to understanding hepatitis epidemiology in northwest Iran.
Best regards,

Shahnaz Sali Reviewer

ACCEPT 21 May 2025

Dear associate editor
I would like to thank the authors for providing a detailed and somewhat comprehensive paper.

Associate Editor

MAJOR REVISION 27 May 2025

Major revisions

Editor-in-Chief

MAJOR REVISION 27 May 2025

Major revisions

2

Revision 1

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Authors ‘response file

July 3, 2025

Replies to reviewers' comments

We thank the editor and the reviewers for their careful review of our work and for providing constructive comments. We appreciate all the time and effort they put into their thorough review. All the reviewer comments were considered in the revised manuscript. Detailed answers to each comment are given below.

Reviewer 1 Comments:

We thank Reviewer 1 for his informative comments. We are proud that the first reviewer checked the details of our manuscript and provided valuable comments to enhance the quality of our work. Here are the answers to each of the comments:

Abstract:

Comment: Replace all instances of "questionnaire" with "checklist" (Line 14 and throughout the main text)

Response: All "questionnaire" terms were replaced with "checklist" and were highlighted in yellow in the corrected file.

Comment: The conclusion should focus on your key findings rather than vaccination recommendations, which were not studied

Response: The conclusion has been edited and highlighted according to this comment.

Methods:

Comment: Clearly state inclusion/exclusion criteria for participants

Response: Inclusion and exclusion criteria were clearly stated in the modified file.

Comment: Justify your sampling approach:

- Explain why gastroenterology clinic patients were used rather than general population sampling
- Address potential selection bias from studying these patients

Response: The modification has been completely done and corrected regarding these three comments. The selection bias was stated and the sampling approach was justified in the corrected file. The changes are indicated with a yellow highlight.

Results:

Comments:

- Present all hepatitis E findings in tables (currently some are missing)
- Include both descriptive statistics and inferential testing:
- Add missing p-values for group comparisons
- Report effect sizes where appropriate
- Highlight statistically significant findings with clear interpretations:
- "The higher seroprevalence in older adults (X% vs Y%, p=0.XX) suggests..."
- "No significant difference by gender (p=0.XX) indicates..."

Response: According to the above comments, statistically significant findings were expressed with obvious interpretations. A new figure and two tables were added. The previous tables were eliminated, and modified tables were replaced. In general, the result section was completely modified following the comments, and the changes are highlighted in yellow. Please check it again if possible.

Discussion:

Comment:

- Add a "Limitations" paragraph addressing:
- Potential selection bias in sampling
- Temporal aspects (single timepoint study)
- Unmeasured confounders (e.g., socioeconomic factors)

Response: A "Limitations" part was added, and all limitations and selection bias were stated, as well as socioeconomic factors were discussed.

Comment:

- Strengthen the interpretation by:
- Comparing your rates to other Iranian regions
- Discussing implications for public health interventions

Response: In the corrected file, the results were compared with the rates of other Iranian regions. Additionally, public health interventions and their implications were discussed. The changes are highlighted.

Language/Formatting:

Comments:

- Ensure consistent terminology throughout
- Verify all statistical reporting follows journal guidelines
- Consider professional editing for clarity

All above comments have been considered, and a comprehensive edit has been done.

❖ Also, the study design was included in the title according to the reviewer assistant's comments and highlighted in yellow.

Reviewer 2 Comments:

We appreciate the second reviewer due to his favor to our manuscript.

2 Revision 1

3 comments · 15 Jul 2025 – 17 Jul 2025

Referee 1 Reviewer

ACCEPT 15 Jul 2025

Dear authors,
I appreciate your time and effort spent on revising the manuscript. I believe that you addressed most of my concerns well. As a result, the revised version of the manuscript is more appropriate for publication.
Regards,

Shahnaz Sali Reviewer

ACCEPT 15 Jul 2025

Dear associate editor

We would like to thank the authors for acting upon comments made by all peers. Implementation of the comments has led to good improvements to the
paper.

Editor-in-Chief

ACCEPT 17 Jul 2025

Accept