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HBV SPECIFIC DNA POLYMERASE ACTIVITY IN CHRONIC LIVER DISEASES.

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This study was carried out to find out the status of Hepatitis B virus (HBV) replication in HBsAg positive and HBsAg negative (also anti-HAV IgM negative) patients of chronic active hepatitis (49), cirrhosis of liver (31) and HBV-carriers (65). Comparative values of DNA-polymerase and HBeAg were also assessed as marker for HBV replication. DNA-polymerase activity was measured by the modified technique of Fang et al, 1981. HBeAg was tested by enzyme immunoassay kit from Abbott Laboratory, U.S.A.

In all the three groups of patients, DNA-polymerase was more frequently a positive marker of viral replication than HBeAg ($p < 0.001$). DNA-polymerase positivity in HBsAg positive chronic active hepatitis, cirrhosis of liver and HBV-carriers was 81.8 %, 72.7 % and 50.8 %, respectively. Among the HBsAg negative patients, 52.6 % of chronic active hepatitis and 44.4 % of cirrhosis of liver were DNA-polymerase positive. This study demonstrates very high prevalence of viral replication in chronic liver diseases and in nearly half of HBV-carrier subjects. Viral replication must be playing a major role in pathogenesis of chronic liver diseases and also putting the HBV-carriers to the risk of chronic liver disease in due course of time.

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