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STUDY OF CHRONIC SEQUELAE OF WATERBORNE
NON-A, NON-B EPIDEMIC HEPATITIS

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Author to Contact Regarding Abstracts: TANDON BADRINATH
Institution: All India Institute of Medical Sciences
Department: Gastroenterology
City: New Delhi
State: Ansari Nagar
Pin Code: 110029
Country: India
Telephone Number: 667896 Age of author presenting this work: 52 years

STUDY OF CHRONIC SEQUELAE OF WATERBORNE NON-A, NON-B, EPIDEMIC HEPATITIS.
B.N.Tandon*, Y.K.Joshi, B.M.Gandhi, S.Babu, M.Tandon.
All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. India

Seven waterborne epidemics of viral hepatitis were studied to establish the etiology during the years 1980-82. Six, predominantly involving adult population were that of non-A, non-B (NANB) hepatitis, while only one occurring among school children below 10 years was attributed to hepatitis A virus. Two of the NANB and the single virus A epidemic were studied in detail. Long term one year follow up by clinical, biochemical and where required, liver biopsy, was done of one of the NANB epidemic to know the chronic sequelae.

Acute stage epidemic revealed two distinct patterns of waterborne NANB viral hepatitis. In one, disease was mild with complete clinical and biochemical recovery within 6 weeks. In the other disease was moderate or severe with 12% mortality in hospital registered patients. Pregnant women had fatality rate of 39%. This raises the possibility of two types of NANB which are transmitted by fecal oral route similar to the types identified for post transfusion transmission of NANB. Epidemic of NANB hepatitis, which was of milder variety, occurred in a training camp of a paramilitary force in northern India. 239 of 845 persons were affected, 40 of which had anicteric disease. There was no mortality. During one year follow up, none of the patients had signs, symptoms or biochemical abnormality suggestive of chronic hepatitis. This suggests that one of the two type of waterborne NANB epidemics of milder variety, behaves exactly like virus A and is not associated with any chronic sequelae.

Send all abstracts to: Girish N. Vyas, Ph.D., Program Chairman
M-502, Department of Laboratory Medicine
University of California
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94141 U.S.A.