

Reviewer's Name: _____

Date Received: 04/25/88

Author(s): H. Gupta, S.K. Acharya, B.M. Gandhi and B.N. Tandon

Title: Localisation of possible Non-A, Non-B viral antigen in
liver tissue by biotin-avidin peroxidase staining

Circle one: Accept Reject Modify Convert to Short Communication

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Comments

This is a study which evaluates the detection of possible NANB viral antigens in liver tissue by biotin-avidin peroxidase staining. Although the study provides potentially important information, several major criticisms can be drawn and, in particular the following ones.

1. The author either in the introduction or the discussion should briefly mention the differences existing between the sporadic NANB hepatitis, observed in the Western countries and the epidemic NANB hepatitis mostly observed in India and eastern USSR. They should also provide more information as the previous attempts done to identify "specific" NANB viral antigen(s) in the serum or in the tissues.
2. Although the methodology followed by the author to identify "specific" NANB antigens is substantially correct, it raises a crucial point which can hamper the entire conclusions. The identification of NANB viral antigens using the convalescent sera is an inadequate method of assessment which has conflicting and confusing results in the past. The statement "post hoc ergo propter hoc" is not always true especially for NANB hepatitis. In fact, the convalescent sera could contain beside of the "specific" antibodies other antibodies such as anti-liver antibodies, antibodies against subcellular fractions, inflammatory proteins elucidated by the cellular necrosis. The high incidence of positivity in fulminant hepatitis could be the consequence of a massive necrosis and of high presence of neoantigen other than viral in liver cells. In this perspective the approach to block the serum with putative antigen(s) isolated from the stools seems of great value. All the conclusions will be reinforced and acquire greater significance if the author will be able to identify the presence of virions in the feces.
3. Since there is no better definition of the specific antibodies involved in the reaction, the author should refer to NANB "antigens" instead as "antigen".

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Is this epidemic, enterically transmitted (ET) NANB or classical, parenterally transmitted NANB? If ET NANB, there should be some IEM verification of antibody in the antisera and convalescent samples from patients. If classical NANB you should submit the analysis to coded samples as so many authors have found unconfirmable results in this disease.

The grammar needs improvement. Figure 1 is unnecessary. The photomicrographs are of poor quality and are not convincing.