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Title: (CAPITAL LETTERS) SIGNIFICANCE OF CIRCULATING
HBsAg/IgM COMPLEXES IN VIRAL HEPATITIS TYPE B

Name(s) of author(s), institution, city, country: B.M.Gandhi.,
Hema Gupta., M.Irshad., Y.K. Joshi and B.N.Tandon.
Deptt. of Gastroenterology & Human Nutrition Unit,
All India Institute of Med. Sciences, New Delhi.

Abstract: Presence of HBsAg complexed with IgM globulin (HBsAg/IgM) has been seen during the early phase of the disease and persistence of these complexes have been shown to be related to transition of the disease to chronicity. The present study was carried out to evaluate positivity of HBsAg/IgM complexes in 67 asymptomatic HBsAg positive blood donors and 72 patients of viral hepatitis type B for HBV-induced chronic liver disease. Circulating HBsAg/IgM complexes were tested by an enzyme immuno-assay based on the selective absorption of IgM on a solid phase. HBsAg/IgM complexes were found to be more common in blood donors (61%) and patients of chronic active hepatitis (60%) in comparison to acute viral hepatitis (31%), fulminant hepatitis (36%) and subacute hepatitis (40%) indicating that HBsAg/IgM complexes are frequently responsible for the pathogenesis of continued liver injury. The complexes were found to be present with HBe-markers in 83% of blood donors and 100% of CAH patients suggesting that both HBsAg/IgM complexes and HBe-markers were associated with CAH and carrier state in high proportion. In 82% of fulminant hepatitis and 50% of sub-acute hepatitis, these complexes were present in absence of any HBe-markers. HBsAg/IgM complexes seemed to be a better marker of predicting the future course of the disease.