

Viral Hepatitis in India

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-4-431-68255-4_100

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Cited in:

In book: *Viral Hepatitis and Liver Disease* (1994). pp 397-399

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Abstract

The clinical spectrum of viral hepatitis varies geographically. In India, epidemic hepatitis, largely caused by hepatitis E virus (HEV), is a major public health problem, with a high mortality rate among pregnant women. However, no chronic sequelae of the disease have been noted. Severe acute hepatitis, presenting as fulminant and subacute hepatic failure (FHF and SHF), has a high prevalence in India, and carries a mortality rate of 80%. In India SHF's clinical features are noteworthy. Chronic hepatitis in India usually has an aggressive clinical course with progressive hepatic failure, unlike the indolent, milder disease with long-term complications known elsewhere. Hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection occurs at an early age, with 95% of the population antibody-positive by age 10. The hepatitis B and C virus (HBV and HCV) carrier rates in India are 2.5% and 1.2%, respectively. Hepatitis D virus (HDV) infection is present but rare. HEV and HCV coinfection and superinfection have been implicated in severe hepatitis.

Key words: Viral hepatitis-Subacute hepatic failure-Fulminant hepatic failure HEV-Cirrhosis-India

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