

Case report: role of hepatitis E virus in the etiology of community-acquired non-A, non-B hepatitis in Greece.

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Case report: role of hepatitis E virus in the etiology of community-acquired non-A, non-B hepatitis in Greece.

Tassopoulos NC¹, Krawczynski K, Hatzakis A, Katsoulidou A, Delladetsima I, Koutelou MG, Trichopoulos D.

¹ First Department of Medicine, Western Attica General Hospital, Athens, Greece.

Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the frequency of hepatitis E virus (HEV) infection in a population of Greek adults with community-acquired (sporadic) non-A, non-B hepatitis found to be seronegative for antibodies to hepatitis C virus (anti-HCV). All patients admitted to the Liver Unit of Western Attica General Hospital and diagnosed as having acute community-acquired non-A, non-B hepatitis between February, 1986, and May, 1990, were enrolled in follow up studies (n = 66). Nineteen patients with HCV infection and 11 patients with acute non-A, non-B, non-C hepatitis that progressed to chronicity were excluded. Convalescent sera were tested for antibody to HEV (anti-HEV) by a fluorescent antibody blocking assay in 33 of 36 eligible patients. One of the 33 (3%) patients was found to be positive for anti-HEV. Anti-HEV testing of all 20 available serum specimens from this patient showed evidence of anti-HEV seroconversion at the fourth week after the onset of hepatitis. The patient had not travelled abroad or within Greece or had not had apparent contact with people from foreign countries for the previous 3 months. These data show that HEV infection is not a major cause of community-acquired non-A, non-B hepatitis in Greece. However, the reported case of HEV hepatitis suggests that HEV may retain a low endemicity in Greece. More extensive seroprevalence studies are needed for an accurate estimation of the extent of HEV infection in the southeastern European countries.

Reference

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