

# Hepatitis B virus among Saudi children in Gizan, Saudi Arabia

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### Hepatitis B virus among Saudi children in Gizan, Saudi Arabia

C M Parande<sup>1</sup>, S C Arya<sup>2</sup>, S J Ashraf<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Gizan General Hospital, GizanSaudi ,Arabia

<sup>2</sup>Department of Medicine, King Fahad Central Hospital,Gizan,Saudi Arabia

## Abstract

Using the enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), the prevalence rates for hepatitis B virus surface antigen (HBsAg), antibody to core antigen (anti-HBc), and antibody to surface antigen (anti-HBs) were studied among 325 school children and those seeking treatment for minor ailments in Gizan City, Saudi Arabia. Tests for hepatitis B virus e antigen (HBeAg), antibody to HBeAg (anti-HBe), IgM antibody to HBV core antigen (IgM anti-HBc) and antibody to delta-virus were made in HBsAg carriers. There was a serological evidence of HBV infection in 91 (28%) Saudis of which 11.1% were HBsAg carriers, 9.5% positive for anti-HBs and 7.4% positive only for anti-HBc. There was no intersex difference for positivity for HBsAg, anti-HBs and anti-HBc. The evidence of existing or earlier infection was higher in females. Among HBsAg carriers, none of the 24 was positive for IgM anti-HBc, 12% were positive for HBeAg or anti-HBe. Anti-delta antibody was present in one of the nine carriers tested. HBV infection in Gizan City is acquired fairly early during childhood with little clinical evidence suggestive of an acute hepatitis. Immunization against HBV should be considered in the neonatal period to prevent the long term sequelae of HBV, like cirrhosis and primary hepatocellular carcinoma.

## Reference

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