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Population Seroprevalence of Hepatitis E Virus Antibodies in Rural Bangladesh

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Abstract

Hepatitis E virus (HEV) causes a substantial burden of sporadic and epidemic disease worldwide. HEV infections result in serious morbidity and mortality, especially among pregnant women, and have significant economic costs. Few population-based studies have characterized the epidemiology of HEV. A rural Bangladeshi population was studied to determine the age- and gender- specific population seroprevalence of antibodies to HEV. Of 1,134 specimens tested from a representative, random population sample, 255 (22.5%) were anti-HEV IgG seropositive. Seroprevalence was lower among women (19.7%) than among men (25.8%). We found anti-HBc (hepatitis B core) in 380 of 1080(35.2%) tested, anti-HCV (hepatitis C) in 14 of 917(1.5%) tested, and anti-HAV (hepatitis A) in 116 of 124(93.5%) tested individuals. Our data suggest that viral hepatitis, especially HEV, remains an under-recognized and significant public health problem in rural Bangladeshi populations, warranting further attention.

Reference:

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