

# Prevalence of hepatitis B virus infection in healthy persons in North India

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## Prevalence of hepatitis B virus infection in healthy persons in North India

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### Abstract

**Background.** There is scant information on the main methods through which hepatitis B virus infection is transmitted in India. We, therefore, studied the prevalence of hepatitis B surface antigen and antibody to hepatitis B surface antigen in voluntary blood donors as well as in those healthy groups who have a high risk of contracting this infection.

**Methods.** The groups at risk studied included commercial sex workers (635), eunuchs (28), truck drivers (217), professional blood donors (1117) and health care workers (1313). In addition, 20435 voluntary blood donors were also studied.

**Results.** Hepatitis B surface antigen (and its antibody) was positive in 2.6% (14%) of voluntary blood donors, 3.6% (19%) of commercial sex workers, 5% (16%) of truck drivers, 12% (9%) of professional donors, 1.4% (19%) of health care workers and none (18%) of the eunuchs. Except professional donors and truck drivers, none of these groups had a higher positivity than the normal population (2.6%).

**Conclusions.** Our results indicate that in India the so-called high risk groups, other than truck drivers and professional blood donors, are unlikely to represent major sources of infection.

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