

Outbreak of acute hepatitis E virus infection among military personnel in northern Ethiopia.

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Outbreak of acute hepatitis E virus infection among military personnel in northern Ethiopia.

Tsega E¹, Krawczynski K, Hansson BG, Nordenfelt E, Negusse Y, Alemu W, Bahru Y.

¹ Department of Internal Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

Abstract

An outbreak of acute hepatitis E virus (HEV) infection occurred from October 1988 to March 1989 in military camps in northern Ethiopia. The epidemic was waterborne and entirely confined to military men, of whom 423 hospitalized, icteric patients were studied. The clinical course was mild and short, without any fulminant hepatitis or death. All sera tested for anti-HAV-IgM were negative and among 54 (13%) patients who were positive for HBsAg, 7 (2%) were positive for anti-HBc IgM. On the other hand, 28 of 30 (93%) patients had antibodies against hepatitis E virus (anti-HEV) in contrast to 1 of 29 (3%) asymptomatic controls (P less than .01). The need for an easily available, inexpensive serologic test for HEV infection, protection of water supplies from fecal contamination, adequate chlorination and/or boiling of drinking water, and health education about personal and environmental hygiene, especially in communities at high risk, is emphasized.

References

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