

Prevention of Hepatitis B in India

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An Overview

Introduction

Hepatitis B is a major public health problem worldwide. Approximately 30% of the world's population, or about 2 billion persons, have serological evidence of either current or past infection with hepatitis B virus. Of these, an estimated 350 million have chronic (lasting more than six months, and often for lifetime) HBV infection and at least one million chronically infected persons die each year of chronic liver disease, including cirrhosis and liver cancer.

The hepatitis B vaccine is highly safe and effective, and prevents HBV infection and its serious consequences. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that hepatitis B vaccine should be given routinely to children in all countries.

The purpose of this document is to review data regarding the disease burden due to hepatitis B in India, as a basis for a decision to introduce hepatitis B vaccine into the national immunization programme

Reference:

B N Tandon, B. M. Gandhi, Y. K. Joshi Etiological spectrum of viral hepatitis and prevalence of hepatitis A and B virus infection in North India. Bulletin of the World Health Organisation 62(1):67-73,1984

Tandon BN, Joshi YK, Gandhi BM, Irshad M, Gupta H, Gupta ML. Epidemiology of HBsAg carriers in India. A holistic approach to control of hepatitis B reservoir. J Gastroenterol Hepatol. 1986;1:39-43