

Hepatitis D virus (HDV) infection in severe forms of liver diseases in north India.

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Hepatitis D virus (HDV) infection in severe forms of liver diseases in north India.

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Abstract

Background: Preliminary reports indicate that hepatitis D virus (HDV) infection exists in India. However, its prevalence in patients with different types of liver diseases has not been studied in detail. The aim of this study was to evaluate the status of HDV infection in severe types of liver disease in India.

Methods: Using commercial kits for various hepatitis viral markers, the present study was undertaken to determine the serological status of hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis D virus (HDV) markers in 208 patients with severe liver diseases. This total included 110 cases with fulminant hepatic failure (FHF), 65 cases with subacute hepatic failure (SHF) and 33 cases with chronic active hepatitis (CAH).

Results: The hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) carrier population, indicated by the presence of HBsAg without IgM anti-HBc (hepatitis B core) in serum, was recorded in 23.6%, 24.6% and 60.6% cases of FHF, SHF and CAH groups, respectively. HBV infection, as indicated by serum positivity of IgM anti-HBc in the FHF and SHF groups and HBsAg and/or IgM anti-HBc in the CAH group, was detected in 19.1%, 23.1% and 69.7% of cases from these three groups, respectively. IgM anti-HDV, demonstrating active/recent HDV infection, was found in 8.1% cases of FHF and 9.2% cases of SHF patients. HDV as a superinfection in HBsAg carriers was noted in 4.5% and 4.6% cases, respectively of FHF and SHF groups. Similarly, HDV-HBV coinfection, diagnosed by simultaneous presence of IgM anti-HBc and IgM anti-HDV in the FHF and SHF groups, was recorded in 3.6% and 4.6% of cases from these two groups, respectively. In the CAH group, HDV infection was observed in 9.2% cases.

Conclusion: HDV infection, recorded in less than 10% of patients with different liver diseases in India, seems to be an unimportant factor in inducing severe liver diseases in this country.

References: Tandon BN, Gandhi BM, Joshi YK. Etiological spectrum of viral hepatitis and prevalence of markers of hepatitis A and B virus infection in north India. *Bull World Health Organ* 1984;**62**:67-73.