

P909

Abstract (poster session)

Frequency of hepatitis D virus infection in HIV-positive and haemodialysis patients in Iran

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Objectives: Hepatitis D virus (HDV) is a defective RNA virus dependent on hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection for its replication and expression. It is known that coexistent infection with HDV tends to aggravate the course of HBV-associated liver disease. HDV is a major public health issue in Iran. Studies from different areas of the country show varied prevalence rates. This study was carried out to determine the frequency of HDV infection among HIV positive and hemodialysis patients with HBsAg in Iran. **Methods:** A total of 720 individuals were enrolled in this study, including 120 hemodialysis (HD) and 600 HIV-infected patients. HBsAg were tested in all subjects. All HBsAg positive cases were evaluated for the presence of anti-HDV antibodies using commercially available enzyme-linked immunoabsorbent assay kits. Finally anti-HDV and HBsAg positive coinfecting samples were used for HDV active RNA confirmation using nested polymerase chain reaction (PCR). PCR products were sequenced, and the genotype of HDV samples was determined. **Results:** Out of 120 HD patients, 9(7.5%) and out of 600 HIV-infected patients 9(1.5%) were HBsAg positive. 3 (33.3%) of HBsAg positive HD samples and 5 (55.5%) of HBsAg positive HIV infected cases, were anti-HDV positive which were then subjected to nested PCR. The amplification results confirmed 3 (37.5%) samples to be HDV-RNA positive. Two of them were HD patients and one was HIV infected case. HDV infection was more common in male than female patients. All of the HIV-HDV co-infected subjects were intravenous drug users and were co-infected with HCV. Genotypes of HDV samples will be reported in the congress. **Conclusion:** Our results suggest that the prevalence of HBV/HDV co-infection is relatively high in HIV and HD patients in Iran. Therefore, practitioners and health care managers should be made aware of the risk of dual infection with HBV and HDV especially in high risk patients.

