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Abstract (poster session)

Has the prevalence of hepatitis E infection changed among pregnant women in Spain?

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Objective: Hepatitis E virus (HEV) causes a high number of epidemic outbreaks in low-income countries, whereas only sporadic cases, especially in travelers, are described in developed countries. Although acute HEV infection usually causes mild and self-limited hepatitis, fulminant hepatic failure and high mortality frequently can occur in pregnant women during the third trimester. The aim of this work was to determinate the seroprevalence of HEV antibodies in pregnant women and the clinical features related to its detection in blood. Method: 1364 pregnant women (mean age 30 years, 15-45) attended in the Obstetric Department for routine screening, were included in this study. 181 women were screened in 2007, 588 in 2009, 271 in 2010 and 324 in 2011. None of the patients presented clinical symptoms related with hepatitis at the time of blood sample collection. For the IgG anti-HEV antibodies detection in serum, a commercial immunoenzymatic method was employed and all positive samples were further studied for the presence of IgM anti-HEV antibodies (HEV Ab and HEV IgM, Dia.Pro Diagnostic Bioprobes, Milan, Italia). A result was considered positive when the sample's optical density/cut off optical density was superior to 2. Positive results by the immunoenzymatic method were confirmed by Western Blot analysis (RecomBlot HEV IgG/IgM, Mikrogen, Martinsried, Germany). In those patients presenting positives results, transaminases ALT/AST levels and clinical symptoms were assessed. Results: the prevalence of anti-HEV IgG among the pregnant women population in Madrid was 2,1%(5/181) in 2007, 4,08%(24/588) in 2009 , 3,3%(9/271) in 2010 and 3,09%(10/324) in 2011, with an overall prevalence of 3,51% (48/1364).0,61%(2/324) tested positive for anti-HEV IgM antibodies which is used as an acute phase marker of HEV infection. None of the woman with a positive data for IgM or IgG presented symptoms. Conclusions: The rate for IgG antibodies in serum among pregnant women in Madrid in 2011 was 3,09% which indicates that the seroprevalence has not changed in the last 5 years despite the increasing rate of immigration and travels to endemic areas.