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Abstract (poster session)

**Chronic hepatitis B among the personnel of three Swiss hospitals: a seroprevalence survey**

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Objectives: Healthcare workers (HCW) are at risk of hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection. In the 70s, increased prevalence of HBV markers in hospital personnel performing exposure-prone procedures (EPP) was documented. Since then, preventive measures including HBV vaccination of HCW have been taken. This seroprevalence survey aims to determine prevalence of HBV infection among hospital personnel in Switzerland. Methods: The study was conducted at St. Gallen Cantonal Hospital, a tertiary care center, and two affiliated regional hospitals. After recommendation of HBV vaccination in Swiss HCW in 1982, vaccination and documentation of a protective anti-HBs titer was applied to all HCW with patient contact. After 2005, this procedure was also offered to personnel without patient contact (20% of all staff). In case anti-HBs still ranged <10IU after vaccinations, anti-HBc was determined. With positive anti-HBc, markers of HBV activity followed. In personnel with chronic hepatitis B or markers of past infection that were found, risk factors for disease acquisition were evaluated. Results: Data were collected between 2005 and November 2012. Including those who left the institution during the investigated time, a total of 9357 personnel had been employed for >6 months. Among these, anti-HBs data was available from 7808 persons (83%). In 82 persons (1%) either anti-HBc was found positive after inadequate vaccination response or a history of hepatitis B was reported. Chronic HBV disease with HBs-antigen positivity was found in 17 persons (0,2%; mean age 45 years; range: 24-60; 47% of total 17 were women). In seven persons, chronic HBV disease was only diagnosed upon performance of the screening test. 14 persons (82% of total 17) came from countries with increased HBV prevalence. For two persons the diagnosis had consequences concerning planned work with performance of EPP. 65 persons (0,8%; with a mean age 48 years, range: 16-53, 80% women) had markers of past infection. 43 persons (66%) came from countries with increased HBV prevalence. Conclusion: With a rate of 0,2%, hospital personnel in our area showed a similar or even lower rate of chronic HBV disease than in the Swiss population where the rate is set at 0,3%. Most members of the personnel with chronic or past infection are of advanced age, which might show results of HBV vaccination efforts both in HCW and in adolescents. The HBV rate among foreign-born hospital personnel likely reflects the situation in their home countries.