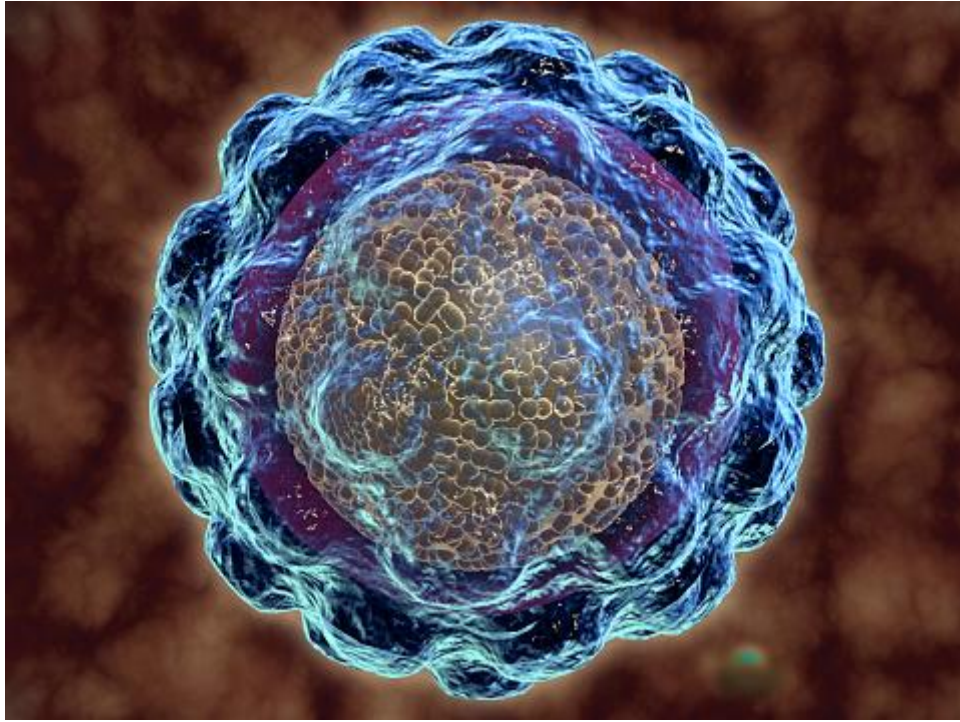


Hepatitis G



Definition

Hepatitis G is a newly discovered form of liver inflammation caused by hepatitis G virus (HGV), a distant relative of the hepatitis C virus.

Description

HGV, also called hepatitis GB virus, was first described early in 1996. Little is known about the frequency of HGV infection, the nature of the illness, or how to prevent it. What is known is that transfused blood containing HGV has caused some cases of hepatitis.

For this reason, patients with haemophilia and other bleeding conditions who require large amounts of blood or blood products are at risk of hepatitis G.

HGV has been identified in between 1-2% of blood donors in the United States. Also at risk are patients with kidney disease who have blood exchange by haemodialysis, and those who inject drugs into their veins. It is possible that an infected mother can pass on the virus to her newborn infant. Sexual transmission also is a possibility.

Often patients with hepatitis G are infected at the same time by the hepatitis B or C virus, or both. In about three of every thousand patients with acute viral hepatitis, HGV is the only virus present. There is some indication that patients with hepatitis G may continue to carry the virus in their blood for many years, and so might be a source of infection in others.

Causes and symptoms

Some researchers believe that there may be a group of GB viruses, rather than just one. Others remain doubtful that HGV actually causes illness. If it does, the type of acute or chronic (long-lasting) illness that results is not clear. When diagnosed, acute HGV infection has usually been mild and brief. There is no evidence of serious complications, but it is possible that, like other hepatitis viruses, HGV can cause severe liver damage resulting in liver failure. The virus has been identified in as many as 20% of patients with long-lasting viral hepatitis, some of whom also have hepatitis C.

Diagnosis

The only method of detecting HGV is a complex and costly DNA test that is not widely available. Efforts are under way, however, to develop a test for the HGV antibody, which is formed in response to invasion by the virus. Once antibody is present, however, the virus itself generally has disappeared, making the test too late to be of use.

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for any form of acute hepatitis. Patients should rest in bed as needed, avoid alcohol, and be sure to eat a balanced diet.

Prognosis

What little is known about the course of hepatitis G suggests that illness is mild and does not last long. When more patients have been followed up after the acute phase, it will become clear whether HGV can cause severe liver damage.

Prevention

Since hepatitis G is a blood-borne infection, prevention relies on avoiding any possible contact with contaminated blood. Drug users should not share needles, syringes, or other equipment.

Key terms

Antibody – A substance made by the body's immune system in response to an invading virus; antibodies then attack and destroy the virus.

Haemophilia – A bleeding disorder that often makes it necessary to give patients dozens or even hundreds of units of blood and blood products over time.

Resources

Organizations

American Liver Foundation. 1425 Pompton Ave., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. (800) 223-0179.
<http://www.liverfoundation.org>.

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Hepatitis terminology used with medicine

What is Hepatitis ?

Hepatitis /hep a 'ti tis/ (hep"ah-ti'tis) pl. hepati'tides Inflammation of the liver.

Hepatitis A - A self-limited viral disease of worldwide distribution, usually transmitted by oral ingestion of infected material but sometimes transmitted parenterally; most cases are clinically inapparent or have mild flu-like symptoms; any jaundice is mild.

Anicteric hepatitis - viral hepatitis without jaundice.

Hepatitis B - an acute viral disease transmitted primarily parenterally, but also orally, by intimate personal contact, and from mother to neonate. Prodromal symptoms of fever, malaise, anorexia, nausea, and vomiting decline with the onset of clinical jaundice, angioedema, urticarial skin lesions, and arthritis. After 3 to 4 months most patients recover completely, but some may become carriers or remain ill chronically.

Hepatitis C - a viral disease caused by the hepatitis C virus, commonly occurring after transfusion or parenteral drug abuse; it frequently progresses to a chronic form that is usually asymptomatic but that may involve cirrhosis.

Cholangiolitic hepatitis - cholestatic h. (1).

Cholestatic hepatitis

1. Inflammation of the bile ducts of the liver associated with obstructive jaundice.
2. Hepatic inflammation and cholestasis resulting from reaction to drugs such as estrogens or chlorpromazines.

Hepatitis D, delta hepatitis - infection with hepatitis D virus, occurring either simultaneously with or as a superinfection in hepatitis B, whose severity it may increase.

Hepatitis E - a type transmitted by the oral-fecal route, usually via contaminated water; chronic infection does not occur but acute infection may be fatal in pregnant women.

Enterically transmitted non-A, non-B hepatitis - (ET-NANB) h. E.



Hepatitis G - A post-transfusion disease caused by hepatitis G virus, ranging from asymptomatic infection to fulminant hepatitis.

Infectious hepatitis - h. A.

Infectious necrotic hepatitis - black disease.

Lupoid hepatitis - chronic active hepatitis with autoimmune manifestations.

Neonatal hepatitis - hepatitis of uncertain etiology occurring soon after birth and marked by prolonged persistent jaundice that may progress to cirrhosis.

Non-A, non-B hepatitis - a syndrome of acute viral hepatitis occurring without the serologic markers of hepatitis A or B, including hepatitis C and hepatitis E.

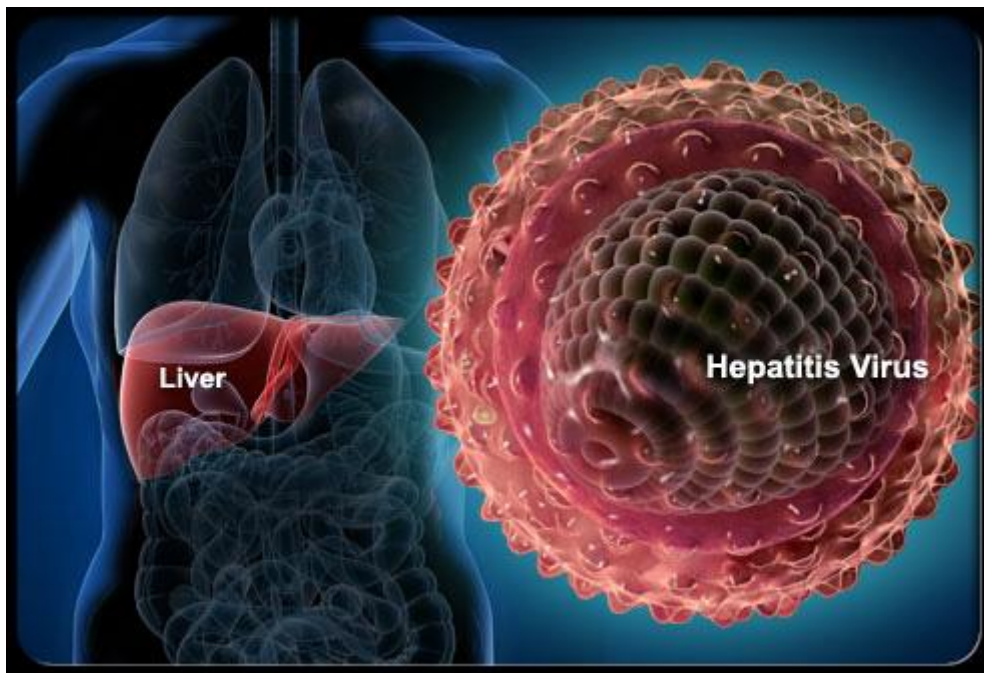
Post-transfusion hepatitis - viral hepatitis, now primarily hepatitis C, transmitted via transfusion of blood or blood products, especially multiple pooled donor products such as clotting factor concentrates.

Serum hepatitis - h. B.

Transfusion hepatitis - post-transfusion h.

Viral hepatitis - h. A, h. B, h. C, h. D, and h. E.

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Hepatitis G - A form of viral hepatitis caused by an RNA virus and often found in conjunction with hepatitis C infection.

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Hepatitis G (HG) - A form of hepatitis, caused by the hepatitis G virus (HGV), that is transmitted by infected blood or blood products. It can also be transmitted by sharing personal items contaminated with the virus, by vertical transmission (mother to newborn), and by various sexual activities. Infection is of widespread occurrence and causes generally asymptomatic to mild disease. It is seen in patients after drug transfusions, in patients undergoing hemodialysis, and in IV drug abusers. It is also seen in infants born to infected mothers. The virus is not primarily replicated in the liver and may only be associated with hepatitis rather than the cause of infection.

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Hepatitis (hep' tī'tis) - An inflammation of the liver.

Hepatitis C (Hep C, non-A, non-B hepatitis) - A type transmitted largely by blood transfusion or percutaneous inoculation, such as with in-travenous drug users sharing needles. The disease progresses to chronic hepatitis in up to 50% of the patients acutely infected.

Hepatitis, chronic active - A hepatitis with chronic portal inflammation with regional necrosis and fibrosis, which may progress to nodular postnecrotic cirrhosis.

Hepatitis, delta (Hep D) - A particularly virulent form caused by the delta hepatitis virus in conjunction with the hepatitis B virus (HBV), which is spread by contaminated needles or by direct exposure to blood or other body fluids from infected individuals. It occurs primarily in persons who have been repeatedly exposed to the HBV either through frequent blood transfusions or intravenous drug use. It may also be spread during the birthing process.

Hepatitis delta virus (HDV) - The infectious agent that causes delta hepatitis, but only in the presence of the hepatitis B virus. The virus is usually superimposed on carriers of the hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg). It is also called the delta agent.

Hepatitis E (Hep E, epidemic non-A, non-B hepatitis) - A self-limited type of hepatitis caused by the hepatitis E virus (HEV) that may occur after natural disasters because of fecal-contaminated water or food. There is currently no serologic test available.

Hepatitis G - A viral infection of the stomach and intestines, transmitted via blood and coinfection with the hepatitis C virus. The duration of the incubation period and range of symptoms are unknown, and no vaccine is available.

Hepatitis, homologous serum (homologous serum jaundice, serum hepatitis, syringe jaundice, type B hepatitis) - A viral hepatitis clinically difficult to distinguish from epidemic infectious hepatitis. It is transmitted by human serum (that is, through parenteral injection, transfusions, lacerations). The incubation period is 40 to 90 days or longer. Principal manifestations are jaundice, gastrointestinal symptoms, anorexia, and malaise.

Hepatitis, infectious (IH, type A hepatitis) - A viral hepatitis that is frequently epidemic in nature and has an incubation period of 1 to 4 or even 7 weeks. It is usually transmitted by the virus in faecal matter but may be transmitted by human (transfusions, lacerations, needle punctures).

Hepatitis, non-ABCDE - A viral infection of the stomach and intestines that is diagnosed by ruling out other forms of hepatitis. It may be transmitted orally, via injection, sexual contact, or faecal matter.

Hepatitis, serum - See hepatitis, homologous serum.

Hepatitis, viral -

1. **Hepatitis** caused by one of three immunologically unrelated viruses: hepatitis A virus; hepatitis B virus; and non-A, non-B virus.
2. **Hepatitis** caused by a viral infection, including that by Epstein-Barr virus and cytomegalovirus.

