

Intrafamily Transmission of HCV Need to More Discussion

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the recently published article by Imani *et al.*,¹ in your journal, in which five out of the 230 (2.17%) tested household contacts were seropositive. We do not have enough data regarding family prevalence of hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection in the literature. Blood and blood products transfusion used to be the main risk factor for transmission of HCV, yet the main risk factor has recently changed to intravenous drug abusing (Injecting drug users; IDUs).²⁻⁴ The prevalence of HCV infection in general population of I.R. Iran is low⁵ and it means that the main risk factor for transmission of HCV infection, IDUs, is low in our general population. The study reveals that we should be aware of transmission of HCV infection in families, but I would like to add some points for more discussion about this issue. The risk of transmission of HCV by sexual route is very low;⁶ the other risk factors such as sharing the razors and tooth brushes may be responsible as well. I would like to ask the physicians to train the family of patients more regarding prevention of HCV transmission. Sexual health precautions and avoiding sexual contact during the menstrual period, according to Islam rules, is mandatory. Another point about the

study by Imani *et al.* in which four out of the mentioned five seropositive household contacts (80%) were the cases' wives and the remaining one (20%) was one of their sister, is the probability of IDUs history in the family positive for IDU especially in the one infected sister which means the transmission had occurred due to a high risk behavior and not intrafamily.^{6,7} We do not have any information about this risk factor in positive family cases in the article.

Keywords: Intrafamily; Transmission; HCV; Iran

Conflict of interest: None declared.

SM Alavian*

Baqiyatallah Research Center for Gastroenterology and Liver Diseases, Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

*Correspondence: Seyed Moayed Alavian, MD, Baqiyatallah Research Center for Gastroenterology and Liver Diseases, Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, PO Box: 14155-3651, Tehran, Iran. Tel/Fax: +98-21-88067114, e-mail: alavian@thc.ir
Received: September 10, 2010 Accepted: October 18, 2010

References

- 1 Imani R, Habibian R, Karimi A, Rahimian GA, Davarpanah MA. Seroprevalence of hepatitis C virus in the families of the patients with hepatitis C infection in Shahre-Kord, Iran. *Iran Red Crescent Med J* 2010;12:472-5.
- 2 Mirahmadzadeh AR, Majdzadeh R, Mohammad K, Forouzanfar MH. Prevalence of HIV and hepatitis C virus infections and related behavioral determinants among injecting drug users of drop-in centers in Iran. *Iran Red Crescent Med J* 2009;11:325-9.
- 3 Umar M, Bushra H, Ahmad M, Khurram M, Usman S, Arif M, Adam T, Minhas Z, Arif A, Naeem A, Ejaz K, Butt Z, Bilal M. Hepatitis C in Pakistan: A review of available data. *Hepat Mon* 2010;10:205-14.
- 4 Amini S, Mahmood Farahani Majd Abadi M, Alavian SM, Joulaie M, Ahmadipour MH. Distribution of hepatitis C virus genotypes in Iran: A population-based study. *Hepat Mon* 2009;9:95-102.
- 5 Alavian SM, Ahmadzad Asl M, Lankarani KB, Shahbabaie MA, Bahrami Ahmadi A, Kabir A. Hepatitis C infection in the general population of Iran: A systematic review. *Hepat Mon* 2009;9:211-23.
- 6 Jahani MR, Alavian SM, Shirzad H, Kabir A, Hajarizadeh B. Distribution and risk factors of hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV infection in a female population with "illegal social behaviour". *Sex Transm Infect* 2005;81:185. [15800109] [doi:10.1136/sti.2004.011114]
- 7 Alavian SM, Hajarizadeh B. Remarkable difference in the mode of HCV transmission among haemodialysis patients and IVDAs. *Gut* 2004;53:1057. [15194666]