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Is it important to screen for hepatitis B, C, and HIV in infertile couple?

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Objectives: In infertile couples receiving assisted reproduction, hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV) and HIV may pose a risk to patients, health care providers and fetuses through cross contamination of biological material. This study aimed at determining the prevalence of HBV, HCV and HIV in a group of infertile couples attending a tertiary care facility in Saudi Arabia.

Materials & Methods: A retrospective cross-sectional observational study was performed by reviewing medical records of 500 couples i.e. 1000 individual patients enrolled between 2006 and 2008. 38 records had incomplete data and were excluded from the study leaving a total of 462 couples. All patients were screened for HBV markers (HBsAg, AntiHBs, AntiHBc and AntiHBe), anti-HCV, anti-HIV type I and II using ELISA technique.

Main Outcome Measures: Prevalence of HBV, HCV, and HIV in infertile Saudi couples.

Results: The overall prevalence of HBV in the population studied was 1.8% (17/924). For females HBV prevalence was 1.5% (7/462), and for males it was 2.1% (10/462). Overall HCV prevalence in this group was 0.5%. All females were negative for HCV while males had a prevalence of 1.1% (5/462). All males and females were negative for HIV.

Conclusion: This study reports a high prevalence for HBV and HCV in a group of Saudi infertile population. HIV prevalence was found to be 0%. Due to the risks of cross sectional and vertical transmission of these infections and despite the low incidence of HIV infection and the cost implications it is important to screen all Saudi infertile couples for these infections prior to embarking on fertility treatments.

Biography

Al-Jaroudi D is an Assistant Professor, King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences. He is a Chairperson of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility department and Medical Forms Subcommittee, Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility Medicine department, King Fahad Medical City.

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