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## Seroconversion to hepatitis B virus in maintenance hemodialysis patients: A case study

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**Introduction:** Hepatitis B infection is still a major concern in hemodialysis units, responsible for significant morbidity among these patients. Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection is a major global health problem, especially in Asia, Africa, southern Europe and Latin America. About two billion people are infected with HBV worldwide and 400 million among them are suffering from chronic HBV infection. Pakistan is highly endemic with HBV with nine million people infected with HBV and its infection rate is on a steady escalation.

**Objective:** We aim to study the seroconversion rate of hepatitis B virus infections among maintenance hemodialysis patients and associated risk at Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi.

**Method:** This study was conducted at the dialysis unit of Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi on end-stage renal disease (ESRD) patients. All adult patients receiving maintenance hemodialysis (n=71) were studied between June 2016 and June 2017. Testing for hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg), hepatitis B surface antibody (HBsAb) and hepatitis B core Igm (COREM) was performed at initiation of dialysis and every six month thereafter. Patients who were sero-negative for HBV were followed up for one year to detect sero-conversions

**Result:** The seroconversion rate was 3.125% in 71 maintenance dialysis patients at Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi resulted from number of blood transfusion, failure to identify and isolate HBV-infected patients during hemodialysis; sharing of staff, equipment, and supplies among patients.

**Conclusion:** Patients on maintenance hemodialysis have lower rates of HBV infection in this study. The factors associated with HBV infection are highly suggestive of nosocomial transmission within hemodialysis units. Strict infection control measures are required.

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