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Prevalence of Hepatitis B and C in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

Janet U Itelima

University of Jos, Nigeria

Statement of Problem: Hepatitis C and B are pathogenic infectious agents that cause inflammation of the liver characterized by the presence of inflammatory cells in the tissues of the organ. The disease condition can be self-limiting or can progress to fibrosis and cirrhosis. Although, infection with hepatitis B virus and (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) remains a global public health problem, in Nigeria as well as in many developing countries, the majority of the infected individuals are unaware of having this disease. An investigation was carried out to determine the prevalence of hepatitis B and C amongst patients attending clinical examination in four major hospitals located in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A total of 1000 patients, who visited the hospitals for clinical examinations had their blood collected for serum/plasma extraction within the period of 12 months from April 2015-March 2016. The samples were analyzed for HBV and HCV antibodies using a commercial rapid diagnostic test kit (Wordfo strip) (Biotech.CO.UK). A psychosocial questionnaire, comprising of demographic features and risk factors associated with HBV and HCV was administered to each participant including both male and female subjects from the age of 15-years and above.

Findings: The results showed that of the 1000 patients that were presented for clinical examination, 139 (13.9%) and 68 (6.8%) were found positive for HBV and HCV respectively. The male subjects accounted for incident rates of 9.1% and 4.5% respectively for HBV and HCV, while their female counterpart accounted for incident rates of 4.8% and 2.3% respectively for HBV and HCV. The results of the prevalence of HBV and HCV with respect to age group indicated that age group of 25-34 years had the highest prevalence of HBV and HCV 48 (4.8%) and 25 (2.5%) respectively, this was closely followed by age group 35-44 with the prevalence of 32 (3.2) and 20 (2.0) for HBV and HCV respectively, while the age group of 55 years and above had the lowest prevalence of HBV and HCV 13 (1.3%) and 2 (0.2%) respectively.

Conclusion & Significance: The incidence of HBV and HCV is relatively high in the study area. This may be due to some factors such as educational status and lack of enlightenment/awareness of HBV and HCV infectivity. As the end point of these viruses is largely related to liver cancer, it therefore calls for quick intervention by the government to enlighten the public of the danger of these viruses and to make necessary effort to control the spread of the infections associated with these pathogens.

Biography

Janet U Itelima has her expertise in Applied Microbiology and passion in research related to Applied Microbiology, Biotechnology, and Plant Science, lecturing, and community services. She has obtained her PhD and currently an Associate Professor of Applied Microbiology. She is an Academic Staff of the Department of Plant Science and Technology, Faculty of Natural Sciences University of Jos. She has published about 34 papers both nationally and internationally. She has also written two books. She is deeply involved in motivating students on how to obtain academic excellence? She has attended workshops and conferences both nationally and internationally, where she presented papers, chaired sessions and served in Advisory Committee.

janetitelima@yahoo.com

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