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## Risky exposures and national estimate of HCV seroprevalence among school children in urban community in Egypt

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Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) is a significant cause of morbidity and mortality all over the world, particularly in Egypt. Limited data is available concerning the national seroprevalence and the possible modes of transmission of HCV in the pediatric age group. The aim of this study was to obtain a better estimate of the national hepatitis C seroprevalence and the possible risky exposures among healthy school children in Alexandria. HCV knowledge and counseling for school children was also investigated. A total of 500 school children, age between 6 and 15 years were evaluated for HCV seropositivity and interviewed for potential disease risk factors. The seropositivity for anti-HCV Ab was 2.8%. About 71.4% of seropositive children were 10-15 years old. Urban residence, chronic disease, male circumcision and invasive procedures were detected as significant risk factors for acquiring HCV infection among the studied children. The level of awareness of hepatitis C among school children was very low (3.6%) and was found associated with the age and educational level. HCV infection continues to occur in children and is frequently unrecognized. This mandates immediate intervention and robust control strategies in the settings of exposure combined with health education programs to limit further HCV spread.

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