Viral Hepatitis

Every one of us has heard the word “hepatitis” and considered it a fatal disease. “Viral hepatitis” is the inflammation of the liver that is caused by a nasty family of viruses. Due to hepatitis, it is estimated that globally 1.34 million people died per year and it is also reported that about 80% of cases of liver cancer are only caused by hepatitis B and Hepatitis C together. The number of patients having this infection is amplifying each year, which is quite an alarming situation (1).

Viral Hepatitis Modes of Transmission

HAV (Hepatitis A Virus) transmitted by the contaminated water (fecal-oral route), and for HBV (Hepatitis B Virus) and HBC (Hepatitis C Virus) there are mainly four modes of transmission, these are;

1. Via blood
2. Through sexually contact
3. Through needle sharing during drug administration and
4. From an infected mother to baby.

Further, health care professionals who are dealing with the patients and their sample are also at higher risk.

What Happened when Hepatitis Virus entered the body?

Hepatitis virus after transmission gets enters into the body, attacks, and damages the liver cells. This damage leads to the inflammation of the liver, due to the inflammation of the liver (Hepatitis) normal functioning of the liver is disturbed which results in the appearance of various signs and symptoms. If the infection is not controlled the disease can be proved fatal (2).

Sign and Symptoms of Hepatitis

The sign and symptoms of hepatitis regardless of type are fever, anorexia, nausea, vomiting, and jaundice. Hepatitis A has no chronic stage while Hepatitis B and C lead to chronic infection. In hepatitis B and C, chronic carriers are usually asymptomatic, but
some have chronic active hepatitis which may progress to cirrhosis, hepatocellular carcinoma, and death (3).

**Diagnostic Tests for Hepatitis**
Laboratory tests for the detection and diagnosis of hepatitis are Liver Function Tests (LFT’s), ELISA, and PCR (4).

**Treatment and Prevention**
For Hepatitis A there is no antiviral therapy available, and the infection itself subsides after 6-12 weeks. Alpha interferons are clinically useful and recommended for the treatment of Hepatitis B and C with antiviral medicines. For prevention of Hepatitis, follow the vaccination schedule as recommended, maintains the hygienic conditions, avoid sexual contact with the patient and handle the patient and clinical samples (i.e. patient blood) carefully. Always use gloves while handling the contaminated samples and deal with syringes cautiously to prevent any needle stick injury. Limit the consumption of alcohol to curtail the risk of hepatocellular carcinoma. The growing number of patients can be reduced by raising the awareness of the disease in public and strengthening the health care system (provide the screening, diagnosis and treatment facilities) (5).

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**References**

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