

Specific Age and Gender Prevalence of Hepatitis C Virus Infection in Iran

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Dear Editor,

We read with interest the valuable paper entitled "Hepatitis C Seroprevalence and Risk Factors in Adult Population of Chaharmahal and Bakhtaran Province of Iran in 2013" recently published in your prestigious journal. Due to limited data about HCV distribution in Iran, the authors have done a great job and with appropriate sample size reported a prevalence of 0.9% (based on Western blotting) for HCV infection in this province of Iran and also showed that prevalence in men is two times higher than woman. However, here we would like to highlight some important points regarding such population studies.

The annual rate of newly diagnosed and treated cases of HCV patients in Iran is 3.2% and 2.4% respectively [2]. Like Moezzi et al., study it is clear that in Iran HCV is more prevalent among men than in women and also that the prevalence rate is different among different age groups of population [1]. As the main route of HCV transmission in Iran is injection drug usage, Iran has the higher prevalence of HCV infection in men with younger age groups [3].

Moezzi and colleagues have reported that the prevalence is the most among the age group of 35-44 years, however it was 25-30 year as reported by Saraswat V et al., [3]. On the other hand it would be better if we have a prevalence rate in Moezzi et al., project based on both age and gender simultaneously.

Data from population based study can help us in better understanding of gender and age distribution of hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection and this can be used by health policy makers for planning the best methods of prevention, screening and treatment [3]. But the right interpretation of result is the first step regarding this issue. We think that a separate prevalence rate among male and female based on the different age group might add to the relevance of Moezzi et al., project.

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AUTHOR'S REPLY

I appreciate the author(s) due to their interest, good comments and introducing new references about hepatitis C in Iran and other countries.

Our study was a population-based study on hepatitis B and C in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, Iran with appropriate sample size and sampling method and we computed prevalence of both infections (hepatitis B and C) with minimum bias.

The comment about prevalence rate based on age and gender was good but it leads to no considerable change in our results, as we have reported hepatitis C prevalence rate 38.5% in 35 to 44-year-old population and 26.9% in 25 to 34-year-old population. By concurrent consideration of age and gender, the prevalence rate in 35-44 years male and female population was obtained 64.3% and 8.3%, respectively. Also, the prevalence rate in 25- to 34-year-old, male and female population was obtained 21.4% and 33.3%, respectively.

Hence, in our study Hepatitis C seems prevalent in 35-44 -year-old male and 25- to 34-year-old female populations.

Thanks,

Masoumeh Moezzi.