



Hepatitis: Screening and Preventive Measures

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A significant public health issue around the world is viral hepatitis, which is brought on by infection with one of the hepatitis viruses. Reviewing the information that is currently available suggests that the South-East Asia Region has a high prevalence of infection with hepatitis viruses A-E. Hepatitis A virus seroprevalence rates are high among enterically transmitted viruses in the majority of the Region's countries, albeit they have recently decreased. Hepatitis A clinical cases, particularly severe forms of the disease, have increased as a result of the rise in the average age at first exposure. Hepatitis A vaccination is available, however it has not yet been used in the Region as a public health precaution. Hepatitis E virus infection is extremely prevalent in many nations, where it frequently leads to waterborne epidemics and accounts for about half of all cases of acute viral hepatitis.

The risk of these illnesses increases with rapid urbanization's lack of access to clean, safe drinking water, nutritious food, and adequate sanitation. Hepatitis B infection rates among bloodborne hepatitis viruses range from low, intermediate, and high among different nations in the region. Either of these viruses can cause persistent infection. Although frequently asymptomatic, persistent infection with these viruses can cause the development of cirrhosis and liver cancer, which are major causes of death in the region. These infections are especially prevalent in some particular population groups, including as intravenous drug users, those who have received blood transfusions, and people who are immunosuppressed. Additionally, certain regions do not screen blood and blood products for substances that cause viral hepatitis. As a result, acute and chronic hepatitis caused by hepatitis virus infection account for a large portion of the disease burden in the South-East Asia Region and cause over 500 000 fatalities there each year. We can lessen our risk of contracting hepatitis in a variety of ways, including by getting vaccinated against hepatitis A and B, using condoms during sexual contact, not sharing needles when using drugs, maintaining good personal hygiene by thoroughly washing our hands with soap and water, refraining from using infected people's personal items, and exercising caution when visiting places with poor sanitation.