



Surveillance, epidemiology and prevention of Hepatitis A in Turkey

Results of the EUROHEP.NET feasibility survey

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COUNTRY CHARACTERISTICS¹

- Total population: 66,800,000
- GDP per capita (Intl\$, 2001): 5,738
- Life expectancy at birth m/f (years): 66/70.6
- Health expenditure/ capita (Intl\$,2001): 170.9
- Health expenditure as % of GDP (2001): 3.9

OBJECTIVES and METHODS

The EUROHEP.NET project is a EU concerted action, supported by the Quality of Life Programme of the fifth framework of the European Community for research. This project addresses issues related to surveillance and prevention of hepatitis A and B in the EU countries, Associated States and Israel. The overall goal is to study the feasibility of a future network on surveillance and prevention and to facilitate the progress of these countries towards enhanced control of hepatitis A and B.

Early 2003, EUROHEP.NET sent a feasibility survey to all participating countries to take stock of the country-specific surveillance and prevention activities for hepatitis A and B. The first achievement of this EU concerted action is to provide in a standardized/comparative way an overview of the different surveillance systems, epidemiology, burden of disease and prevention programmes for these infectious diseases.

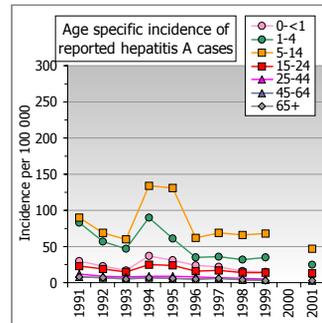
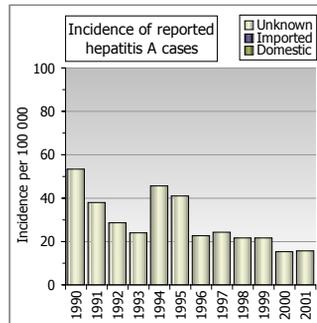
SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance system	Since 1990
mandatory reporting	yes
voluntary reporting	no
sentinel	no
laboratory	no

Flow chart of the surveillance system



EPIDEMIOLOGY



CASE DEFINITION

EC case definition is used:

- **Probable:** clinical picture compatible with hepatitis (e.g. discrete onset of symptoms and jaundice or elevated serum aminotransferase levels) and epidemiological link.
- **Confirmed:** clinical case definition and laboratory confirmation (IgM antibody to hepatitis A or nucleic acid in serum or antigen in stool)

- Definition of an **outbreak:** there is no standard outbreak definition.

BURDEN OF DISEASE

Acute hepatitis A	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Hospitalised cases/100 000 inhabitants					
Hospitalisation days per case ²					
Deaths	10	8	8	4	3
Mortality (total number of deaths per 100 000)	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00
Total number of liver transplants					

Outbreaks of hepatitis A: 1997-2001: no outbreaks were reported to the Ministry of Health

COMMENTS

- EC case definition is used for surveillance purposes.
- There is underreporting for acute hepatitis A cases.
- Hepatitis A is considered as an endemic disease in Turkey.
- There are no studies conducted by the Ministry of Health on hepatitis A, but many studies have been carried out by universities (prevalence studies).
- There is no universal hepatitis A vaccination programme in place.

PREVENTION³

Risk group programmes	Available since
injecting drug users	no
men who have sex with men	no
international travellers to endemic areas	no
chronic liver disease patients	no
clotting factors disorder patients	no
medical and paramedical personnel in hospitals including kitchen staff and cleaners	no
people residing in areas of extended community outbreaks	no
pre-school children attending day care centres	no
day care centre personnel	no
residents and staff of closed communities (Psychiatric Institutions and Institutions for mentally disabled)	no
refugees residing in temporary camps	no
food-service establishment workers/food handlers	no
household contacts of infected persons	no
children of migrants visiting an endemic country of origin	no
other risk groups	no

FOOTNOTES

1. Country characteristics: SPO (Prime Ministry State Planning Organization) and SIS (Prime Ministry State Institute for Statistics).
2. Data on hospital admissions are not available, neither are data on liver transplantations
3. For risk groups, there is not really a policy but vaccination is administered to some of these risk groups in the hospitals.