

Entità del rischio infettivo per virus dell'epatite C in ambito sanitario

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KEY WORDS

Hepatitis C; health-care workers; risk factors

SUMMARY

«Degree of hepatitis C infection risk in health care workers». **Background:** *Hepatitis C virus is the most important aetiological agent for non A-non B hepatitis. The study of the prevalence of hepatitis C in health care workers is of primary interest because of the possible chronic evolution and the risk of cirrhosis and liver cancer.* **Objectives:** *The purpose of this study was to determine the prevalence of HCV among health care workers in 5 main hospitals and local health units in Turin and analyze the influence of occupational and non occupational risk factors.* **Methods:** *Health care personnel were administered anonymous questionnaires and testing for anti-HCV antibody was performed.* **Results:** *Prevalence rates in 4517 health care workers was 1.97%; the prevalence was higher in elderly workers (>45 years) than in younger ones. The risk analysis did not reveal any significant correlation between HCV seroconversion and accidental blood exposure. However, a significant correlation was found with non-occupational risk factors. Unapparent infection was an unimportant risk factor for seroconversion.* **Conclusions:** *Hepatitis C prevalence in the population under study was comparable to that found in the general population. These results point to the need to reconsider the assumption that there is an increase of risk of seroconversion for health-care workers, in the absence of any occupational accidental exposure to hepatitis C virus.*

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