

Hepatitis A in Children- Clinical Course, Complications and Laboratory Profile: Correspondence

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To the Editor: We read with great interest the article by Kumar et al. that reported the clinical course, complications and laboratory profile of Hepatitis A in children [1]. Although, they emphasized the hyperendemicity, fatal complications and cost effectiveness of Hepatitis A infection; and importance of improved sanitation and health education for its prevention, the importance of vaccination for preventing and control of Hepatitis A virus infection was not mentioned in their article. We think that vaccination against Hepatitis A would be significant part of planning for the prevention and control of viral hepatitis. Therefore, we want to make some comments on their article.

Hepatitis A infection is a widespread disease, accounting for 1.4 million cases annually worldwide. In high endemic areas, the reported incidence of Hepatitis A infection may reach 150 per 100,000 per year [2]. The clinical spectrum of Hepatitis A infection ranges from asymptomatic infection to fulminant hepatitis. Clinical manifestations depend on the age of host: less than 30 % of infected young children are symptomatic, while approximately 80 % of adults manifest severe hepatitis with remarkably elevated serum aminotransferases [3]. Acute liver failure occurs in less than 1 % of cases. Hepatitis A infection is the most common detected cause of fulminant hepatitis among children in our country as well as worldwide [4].

The application of a routine Hepatitis A virus vaccine among children will reduce the potential for the development of severe complications. Hepatitis A incidence has declined 92 % with universal vaccination of young children in United

States [5]. Universal Hepatitis A virus immunization program has begun in Turkey since October 2012. Nearly 100 % of people develop protective levels of antibodies to the virus within one month after a single dose of the vaccine. Even though a single dose of the vaccine has protective effects; still, manufacturers recommend two vaccine doses to ensure a longer-term protection of about 5 to 8 y after vaccination.

Hepatitis A infection is an important public health problem in developing countries. Vaccination against hepatitis A virus is necessary for children older than one year. We believe that in addition to improved sanitation and food safety, the universal Hepatitis A virus immunization programs are the most important means in effort to reduce Hepatitis A virus infection and related severe complications.

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