Hepatitis E among Pregnant Women in Urmia, Iran

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Abstract : Background: Although the hepatitis E virus mostly causes a self-limited disease in general population, the disease is more severe in pregnant women. Hepatitis E accounts for about 10% of pregnancy-associated deaths in southern Asia. Methods: 136 pregnant women who referred to urban health centers of Urmia for pursuing pregnancy-related health services were selected randomly and enrolled in a descriptive, cross-sectional study. Each subject was tested for the presence of anti-HEV IgG antibody using an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA, Dia.Pro). Results: The mean age among 136 pregnant women was 25.12±4.91 years old (range of 14-39 years). Only five cases (3.6%) among all 136 subjects were demonstrated to be seropositive for anti-HEV IgG using ELISA method. There was no significant difference between age (P=0.88), income level (P=0.19) of two seropositive and seronegative groups. All seropositive cases were from urban areas. Conclusion: The seroprevalence of anti-HEV IgG is low in the population of pregnant women in Urmia, Iran. Because of limited sample size in this study, we recommend to perform further studies with larger sample size in other regions of Iran in order to be able to systematically generalize the findings of studies to the population of Iranian pregnant women.

Keywords : pregnancy, hepatitis E, women, ELISA

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