

## Acute Hepatitis A Outbreak in Men Who Has Sex with Men in a Medical Center in Northern Taiwan

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**Abstract :** Introduction: Hepatitis A virus causes acute hepatitis and is usually transmitted by a fecal-oral route of food contamination, which is more prevalent in areas with poor hygienic practices. However, we described a hepatitis A outbreak associated with a fecal-oral route of sexual behavior in men who has sex with men (MSM) in Northern Taiwan. Methods: We retrospectively collected patients with acute HAV infection in MacKay Memorial Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan between July 2015 and November 2016. Demographic data (age, gender, onset time and infection risk), laboratory data (GOT, GPT, bilirubin, HIV status, HBsAg, HCV antibody and syphilis), clinical symptoms and travel history with a foreign tour were analyzed. We compared variables between HIV and non-HIV group. Unless otherwise stated, continuous variables were expressed as mean  $\pm$  SD, and categorical variables were expressed as number (percentage) for each item. The t test for continuous variables was applied for the comparison between two groups and chi-square for categorical variables were applied for measures of association. Results: We collected 80 cases during the study period. Among them, 54 (67.5%) cases were MSM and 43 (53.8%) cases were HIV positive. The average age was  $32.6 \pm 7.59$  years-old. The average value of initial liver function was 1324 IU/L for AST (GOT), 2100 IU/L for ALT (GPT), and 5.82 mg/dL for bilirubin. We found seven (8.6%) cases were in the status of HBV carrier, five (6.3%) cases were positive for HCV antibody, and 15 (18.6%) cases were co-infected with syphilis. With regards to associated symptoms, 32 (40%) had fever, 46 (57.5%) had nausea, 34 (42.5%) had abdominal discomfort and 46 (57.5%) had general malaise. To compare the non-HIV patients with HIV patients, HIV patients were more likely to be male ( $p=0.008$ ), MSM ( $p=0.000$ ), co-infected syphilis ( $p=0.000$ ) and slowly improving liver function of transaminases ( $p=0.033$ ,  $0.027$ ). Conclusion: The HAV outbreak in Northern Taiwan was mainly occurred in MSM population. Hereafter, our cohort data support a policy in Taiwan to provide one dose of free HAV vaccine shot in this population. Hopefully, the outbreak could be stop by the free vaccine policy and public education.

**Keywords :** acute hepatitis A, men who has sex with men, human immunodeficiency virus, vaccine

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