



Hepatitis B: Fighting a Battle

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection is a severe global health problem, affecting millions of people in the world, though there is a significant development in understanding the epidemiology, pathogenesis, and prevention strategies posing a significant challenges to public health.

Bangladesh is a developing country of South Asia and it is densely populated, according to the first report in 1984, the prevalence of HBV infection was 7.60% in Bangladesh and indicated as a country with a high intermediate prevalence of hepatitis B. A study conducted in 2013 found prevalence rate 4.90% on people attending a hospital in Dhaka for routine medical check-up. This is indeed a good information depicting decline in prevalence of Hepatitis B infection^{1,3}.

Hepatitis B virus infection spreads when blood, semen, or other body fluids from a person infected with the virus enters the body of someone who is not infected. Needle sharing among drug abusers, sharing of razors, accidental needle prick among health personnel, unprotected sexual act can lead to HBV infection².

HBV infection is a silent pandemic. Chronic HBV infection often progresses silently. This renders many individuals unaware of their infection status until complications arise. This silent pandemic continues to cause complications. Nonetheless, there is also spread of the virus among other people. This requires increased efforts in active case detection, pathological testing and diagnosis followed by treatment and vaccination. All the preventive and control measures count in combating this silent pandemic.

Stigmatizing is a big miscreant for early detection and this discourages diseased individuals seek medical treatment. Elimination of stigmatization is mandatory for encouraging these people to attain medical centers to obtain treatment. Health education in combination with community and culturally sensitive awareness programmes¹.

Early diagnosis of Hepatitis B infection can help in quick treatment of the disease thereby it can also prevent spread of the disease in the community. Hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) is used as biomarker for diagnosis of HBV infection.

Vaccination against HBV is highly successful in preventing new infections. In many countries the implementation of universal vaccination program has reduced the incidence specially in infants and children. But there are inequalities in vaccine coverage and lack of availability of vaccinen in different parts of the world.

Global partnership is necessary for HBV infection elimination. The battle against HBV requires a health personnel to be united, crossing all geographical boundaries and political barriers. International collaborations, with coordination between governments, NGOs, academic circles, public and the private sectors, are necessary for effective implementation of prevention, diagnosis, and treatment strategies. *Exchanging information between people, teams, or organizations* and governments, expertise, and resources will boost the global capacity to fight HBV infection and achieve the targets of World Health Organization¹.

We have to go a long way to overcome the battle against hepatitis B infection. Nevertheless

cooperative activities and dedication a world free of HBV infection can be envisioned. Progress in diagnostics, treatment, and public awareness and research will play a pivotal role to reduce the burden of the disease and therefore prevent suffering. We should move forward, unitedly, leveraging knowledge and concern to overcome this challenge to make a healthier future for all.

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