**Detection and evaluation of chronic hepatitis B and C patients who were lost to medical follow up**

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Background

Treatment options for chronic hepatitis B (hepB) and C (hepC) have improved rapidly last years. Detecting patients who are lost to follow up, enables to bring them back to medical concern and evaluate their treatment indication. Long term complications as well as viral transmission can hereby be prevented. To identify the most effective detection method, we compared detection using laboratory records to detection using regional public health service (RPHS) mandatory notification records.

Methods

Two local laboratories identified patients with positive HBsAg/anti-HCV test results in the past 15 years in the region of Arnhem. The RPHS selected all notified patients for the same period. Only patients of general practitioners (GPs) who agreed to perform evaluation were included. Laboratory and RPHS selections were compared and overlap was calculated. GPs referred patients with active hepatitis to a hospital and followed up patients with inactive hepatitis.

Results

In total, 282 hepB and 53 hepC patients were detected: 273/282(97%) and 49/53(92%) by a laboratory, 91/282(32%) and 12/53(23%) by the RPHS. Evaluation was not needed in 121/282(43%) hepB patients, mainly because they already were under medical supervision, and not possible in 102/282(36%) patients for several reasons. Out of 59 hepB patients with a known indication for evaluation, 22(37%) were evaluated: 7 were referred to a hospital and 15 followed up. One hepC patient had a known indication for evaluation.

Conclusion

Detection and evaluation of chronic hepatitis B/C patients in the region of Arnhem showed that these methods are effective in detecting patients with an indication for treatment. Detection by laboratory records was more effective than by RPHS notification records. We recommend RPHSs to collaborate with local laboratories to detect chronic hepatitis B/C patients

**Main messages**:

* Detection of chronic hepatitis B and C patients who were lost to follow up, enables evaluation of the indication for current treatment options.
* Public health services can collaborate with laboratories to detect chronic hepatitis B and C patients in their archives and inform their general practitioners.

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