





REVIEW ARTICLE

Occult hepatitis B virus infection and current perspectives on global WHO 2030 eradication

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Abstract

The current World Health Organization (WHO) Hepatitis Elimination Strategy suffers from lack of a target for diagnosing or expunging occult HBV infection. A sizable segment of the global population has an undetected HBV infection, particularly the high-risk populations and those residing in countries like India with intermediate endemicity. There is growing proof that people with hidden HBV infection can infect others, and that these infections are linked to serious chronic hepatic complications, especially hepatocellular carcinoma. Given the current diagnostic infrastructure in low-resource settings, the WHO 2030 objective of obliterating hepatitis B appears to be undeniably challenging to accomplish. Given the molecular basis of occult HBV infection strongly linked to intrahepatic persistence, patients may inexplicably harbour HBV genomes for a prolonged duration without displaying any pronounced clinical or biochemical signs of liver disease, and present histological signs of moderate degree necro-inflammation, diffuse fibrosis, and hence the international strategy to eradicate viral hepatitis warrants inclusion of occult HBV infection.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT