VERTICALLY ACQUIRED HEPATITIS B VIRUS INFECTION IN CHILDREN BORN ABROAD

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BACKGROUND

- Thanks to systematic immunization programs, the prevalence of chronic hepatitis B virus (HVB) infection has decreased dramatically in many countries.
- Although spontaneous loss of HBsAg has been described in vertically-infected children, long term evolution remains unclear.

METHODS

- A retrospective, descriptive study, including all children diagnosed with HVB infection in a Referral Center for Tropical Pediatric diseases, was performed.
- Clinical and epidemiological data were collected from medical records, at baseline and follow-up, from 1999 to Dec-2017.

RESULTS

n: 27

■ Adoptions ■ Immigrant ■ Refugees

Birth Country

	AgHBs	AbHBs	AbHBc	AgHBe	AbHBe
+	25	4	27	10	5
-	2	23	0	17	12

- Both patients with negative AgHBs had positive AbHBe with negative AgHBe.
- 17/27 were characterized as non-replicative (HBeAg- and HBeAb+). All positive AbHBe were negative AgHBe.

Laboratory tests	Median	IQR
GOT	107,43 U/L	39-73
GPT	36 UI/L	32-109
GGT	13,5 UI/L	10-17,25
Total bilirubin	0,47 mg/dl (AVR)	0,13 (SD)

- HAV, HCV, HDV, HEV serology were performed in all patients. Only 7/27 (25,92%) HAV IgG were positive

- Genotype and VL were performed in 23/27 (85,18%): 8/27 (29,62%) with VL higher than detection range, undetectable 2/23 (8,7%), the others: mean VL 7.947.323 pg/ml (SD± 23.709.055).

Country	A	B	C	D	E	F
Vietnam	2	1	2			
China		2				
Russia		2				
India		1	1	6		
Czech Republic		1				
Ethiopia				2		
Burkina Faso					1	
Malí					1	
Bolivia						1

Patients were followed up for at least 4 years:

- At the beginning: 25/27 chronic active hepatitis and 2/27 immunotolerants.
- Fibroscan was performed at least once along the study period; all F0-F1 stage, with no progression during follow-up
- Ultrasound was performed in all: 6/27 (22,22%) hepatomegaly without more signs.
- There was no liver failure.
- No patients required specific treatment.
- Spontaneous HBsAg clearance was detected in 6 (median age: 12.5 (IQR 6-16)
- No patient developed positive AcHBs.

CONCLUSIONS

- Although in develop countries HB is rare, is increasing due to adoptions, refugees and immigration..
- Screening of viral hepatitis is mandatory in all children born abroad, immigrant or adopted.
- Immunotolerance is the most common situation, with normal hepatic function and a high viral load. Spontaneous clearance is not uncommon.