



Virological and epidemiological features of hepatitis delta infection among blood donors in Nouakchott, Mauritania

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Résumé en anglais	<p>Background In Mauritania, some authors have described a possible high prevalence of hepatitis delta virus (HDV) infection in the 1990s in studies of small-size samples.</p> <p>Objectives The aims of our study were to assess the prevalence of HDV in HBsAg positive blood donors in Mauritania, to identify the main risk factors for HDV transmission and to analyze genetic diversity of HDV strains.</p> <p>Study design From October 2008 to December 2009, 11,100 consecutive blood donors were considered in this study. Among them, 1700 (15.3%) were HBsAg positive and 455 accepted to participate in this study.</p> <p>Demographic, epidemiological, ethnical, clinical and biological data were recorded.</p> <p>HDV screening, i.e., antibodies (HDVAb) and RNA (HDV-RNA) detection, was performed for all of them as well as HDV and HBV genotyping.</p> <p>Results Ninety/455 (19.78%) donors were HDVAb positive and HDV-RNA was detectable in 56 (62.2%) of them.</p> <p>HDV infection was significantly associated with older age, number of marriages, military profession, residence in the desert and a history of hospitalization.</p> <p>The HDV genotypes of the circulating strains were HDV-1 (89.3%) and HDV-5 (10.7%).</p> <p>Conclusion HDV is highly endemic in Mauritanian blood donors indicating that a high number of them will develop chronic hepatitis, cirrhosis or hepatocellular carcinoma.</p> <p>Associated risk factors support nosocomial transmission of HDV. These data underline the need to reinforce HBV vaccination in newborns and in blood donors without HBV markers, together with screening for HDV in HBV-infected individuals.</p>
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