Detection of hepatitis G virus envelope protein E2 antibody in blood donors

I enjoyed the article by Ramezani et al., “Detection of hepatitis G virus envelope protein E2 antibody in blood donors,” published in a recent issue of the International Journal of Infectious Diseases, and would like to make some comments on this article.

Firstly, the authors evaluated hepatitis G virus (HGV) antibody and ribonucleic acid (RNA) among 478 blood donors in Tabriz City, but then went on to reflect their results onto the whole population of Iranian blood donors. Iran is a country with a population of more than 70,000,000, and a survey in the northwest of the country, on 478 samples, cannot be representative of the HGV status for all Iranian blood donors. The pattern of prevalence of hepatitis G may well be different in the various other regions of Iran. For example, Gharebaghian et al. showed the hepatitis G prevalence in Tehran, the capital of Iran, to be 4.2% among 330 blood donors, a higher prevalence value than that determined by Ramezani et al. The current prevalence of virus in other parts of the country remains to be elucidated, and then a meta-analysis will determine the countrywide pattern.

Secondly, in liver function tests, the mean levels of ALT and AST were cited for both groups — those with positive results for HGV and those with negative results for HGV; however, no reference ranges were given, which makes the description and interpretation of the results somehow confusing.

Conflict of interest: No conflict of interest to declare.

References


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Reply to the Letter to the Editor

Dear Dr Cameron


In reply to the first point made, because Tabriz City is not well known to scholars around the world, we used ‘Iran’ in the ‘Aims’ section to give readers an immediate understanding of the place of study; however in the ‘Patients and methods’ section it was explained that the study took place in Tabriz City. This policy is common in many papers published in international journals. Also, we did not reflect our results onto all Iranian blood donors. As mentioned in the ‘Discussion’ section, “We have shown a low frequency of

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