
Article Publication

Background
- Between 2010 and 2014, the incidence of hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection increased among women ≤30 years of age in the United States.
- The increased incidence raises concerns about the number of infants exposed to HCV at birth because HCV is transmitted to ~6% of infants born to HCV-infected women (vertical transmission).
- Trends in HCV testing and test results may inform screening recommendations for pregnant women.
- Objective: Investigators evaluated the potential for mother-to-child transmission by examining rates of 1) HCV infection among women of childbearing age (WCBA), 2) HCV testing among infants, and 3) infants born to HCV-infected mothers.

Methods
- This study included testing data collected at the laboratory of Quest Diagnostics from 2011 through 2014.
- Infection rates among WCBA and testing rates among infants born to HCV-infected mothers were determined for the United States and Kentucky, the state with the highest rate of acute HCV infection between 2011 and 2014.
  - HCV antibody and RNA testing data were used to determine infection rates in WCBA and testing rates in infants.
  - Birth certificate data were used to determine the rate of infants (≤2 years old) born to HCV-infected mothers.

Results
- In the United States overall:
  - Among WCBA, HCV detection rates increased 22% (139 to 169 per 100,000).
  - Among infants, HCV testing rates increased 14% (310 to 353 per 100,000).
  - The rate of infants born to HCV-infected women increased 74% (186 to 325 per 100,000).
- In Kentucky:
  - Among women of childbearing age, HCV detection rates increased 214% (275 to 862 per 100,000).
  - Among infants, HCV testing rates increased 151% (403 to 1,011 per 100,000).
  - The rate of infants born to HCV-infected women increased 125% (706 to 1,588 per 100,000).

Conclusions
- The results of this study suggest an increased risk of mother-to-child transmission of HCV in the United States. The increase in risk may be larger in some states, such as Kentucky, than others.
- These results highlight the importance of following surveillance practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recommend identifying people at risk for HCV infection and pursuing testing.

Article published in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

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Citation

Webpage
CDC.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6528a2.htm

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