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Full Length Research Paper

Hepatitis C Virus Antibody Among Blood Donors: The Experience in a Nigerian Blood Transfusion Service Centre

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Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is one of the blood borne viral agents of significant worldwide medical concern because of post transfusion hepatitis. This study is to determine baseline data on HCV in our blood service to guide future planning towards the quality of blood transfusion. All consenting blood donors between January and March 2013 were screened with ELISA for hepatitis C virus antibody and their ABO blood groups determined. The subjects were 2382 (87.5%) voluntary and 339 (12.5%) family replacement blood donors. The overall prevalence of HCV antibody among our subjects was 6.1%. There were 156 (6.6%) sero positive HCV reactions among the voluntary blood donors which is significantly higher than 10 (3.0%) observed among family replacement donors; $p=0.01$. The sex prevalence of HCV among the male and female donors were 6.2% and 5.9% respectively; $p=0.7$. The highest prevalence of 12.6% was recorded among donors aged 46-55 years. The rate of HCV antibody positivity was 8.4% among new voluntary non remunerated blood donors, 2.5%, 3.0%, and 8.6% among regular voluntary non remunerated blood donors, family replacement blood donors and lapsed donors respectively. The differences in the HCV prevalence among the ABO blood groups were not significant; $p>0.05$. We conclude that HCV infection is common among all types of blood donors.

Keywords: Hepatitis C virus, Blood donors, Blood Service