

Review of: "[Mini Review] Global Burden and Evolving Understanding of Hepatitis E Virus"

Ashley Stueck¹

¹ Dalhousie University

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The authors provide an excellent review of up-to-date knowledge of human HEV infection, including epidemiology, transmission, presentation, and treatment. It is clear and well-written. It would be a good review for people unfamiliar with HEV and would provide some additional knowledge for medical professionals who may encounter it.

I have some minor suggestions to improve the review:

In the abstract and introduction, suggest changing "...is the leading cause of acute viral hepatitis." to "is a leading cause of...". The reference cited does not support that HEV is the most common cause of acute viral hepatitis in the world, so I suggest this change unless the authors can prove it (and I anticipate HAV is still the front-runner, although one could argue that lack of testing/awareness of HEV contributes to this).

Under the "Virological characteristics" heading, "Morphology and Classification", I am not convinced that the latter half of the paragraph adds much and is a bit confusing. One could simplify by saying "HEV belongs to the Hepeviridae family, orthohepevirus genus, A species".

Under the "Animal reservoir and cross-species transmission" heading, under "modes of transmission": I would particularly highlight the risk of undercooked pork; for example, "...is also linked to the consumption of food products from zoonotic reservoirs (pigs, wild boars, deer, and recently dromedaries, through meat or milk); undercooked pork is a classic example."

Under "chronic hepatitis E", I suggest changing "The infection is asymptomatic..." to "The infection is often asymptomatic..." I would also suggest adding a sentence, perhaps after "...fluctuating elevation of transaminases," which says something like "Chronic HEV should be considered in this vulnerable population if there is a fluctuating elevation of transaminases, unexplained chronic active hepatitis, and/or a sudden worsening of pre-existing liver disease," to bridge the link between this patient population and testing for chronic HEV.