

An Outbreak of Hepatitis C Virus Infections in a Hospital Hemodialysis Unit, Taiwan, 2020

Kuo-Hao Huang*, Yu-Chun Lo, Hsiao-Lien Huang, Pei-Ching Huang

Abstract

In June 2020, a hospital in Hualien reported two cases with positive anti-hepatitis C virus antibody (anti-HCV) among long-term hemodialysis patients, which indicated a suspected cluster infection.

The health unit launched an investigation to identify the source of infections and discovered: (1) The hospital failed to implement infection prevention and control measures; (2) staff mixed care of non-hepatitis, hepatitis B and C patients; (3) staff neglected the standard aseptic techniques nor wearing personal protective equipment when performing dialysis procedures; (4) bedsheets and linens were not changed on regulatory shifts; and (5) no separation area for infectious and non-infectious patients, and no backup dialysis machines are available.

The Eastern Regional Center of Taiwan Centers for Disease Control and Hualien County Health Bureau recommended correcting the faulty measures and inspected the improvement. The hospital staff followed accordingly to implement relevant infection control measures, adjust beds, avoid mixing care of patients, use personal protective equipment, apply strict hand hygiene at work, keep patient's belongings in individual lockers when dialysis, change bedsheets and linens regularly and add backup machines for emergency use. As of June 2021, no new cases were identified, and the hospital was encouraged to refer hepatitis C cases for treatment and targeting eliminating hepatitis C.

Keywords: Acute hepatitis C, hemodialysis, infection control

Eastern Regional Center, Centers for Disease Control,
Ministry of Health and Welfare, Taiwan
Corresponding author: Kuo-Hao Huang*
E-mail: kuohao@cdc.gov.tw

Received: Dec. 28, 2021
Accepted: May. 11, 2022
DOI: 10.6525/TEB.202307_39(14).0001