Reviewer A:  
Recommendation: Revisions Required  
  
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Reviewer's Assessment

* There are significant papers ignored in the Introduction.
* The figures/tables are not well conceived. Their information cannot be understood.
* The conclusions are not sound or are not based on the actual findings of the paper.
* The paper does not clearly identify the implications for research or practice.

Comments for Authors and Editor------------------------------------------------------  
  
  
  
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Reviewer B:  
Recommendation: Revisions Required  
  
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Reviewer's Assessment

* The Abstract is not structured.
* The materials and methods are not properly described, so that the reader could clearly understand what was done and on whom. The chapter should be written in a way that the research can be reproduced.
* The results are not presented clearly, they should be more concise, and precise.
* The results are not analyzed appropriately in the Discussion section.
* The conclusions are not sound or are not based on the actual findings of the paper.
* There are references inserted in the text that do not provide the information presented in the text.
* Please provide all abbreviations in full on first use.

Comments for Authors and Editor

The manuscript presents potentially interesting data on viral hepatitis E and viral hepatitis A. It provides information on the increased number of hospitalized patients with hepatitis E (2018 and 2019 compared to 2017) in a teaching hospital of North-western Romania, comparing clinical and paraclinical parameters in hepatitis E and hepatitis A group patients. The study underlines the potential of severe forms and death in the hepatitis E group patients.

The manuscript presents potentially interesting data on viral hepatitis E and viral hepatitis A. It provides information on increased number of hospitalized patients with hepatitis E (2018 and 2019 compared to 2017) in a teaching hospital of North-western Romania, comparing clinical and paraclinical parameters in hepatitis E and hepatitis A group patients. The study underlines the potential of severe forms and death in the hepatitis E group patients.

**Major issues are underlined below:**

**Abstract**

Page 1, line 9 and 10- Methods section should not include results (number of patients included)

Page 1, line 12- please present the total number of patients with hepatitis A and  hepatitis E in the study interval.

Page 1, line 14- a milder course of hepatitis E can not be sustained as more severe forms (25% versus 3.3%) and a mortality of 6.25% versus zero were described in the hepatitis E group compared to the hepatitis A group.

Pg 1, line 20 –the conclusions are not in accordance with the results section

**Backgroud and Aims**

Page 1, line 31- please give references.

Page 2, line 19- the methodology of surveillance of hepatitis A in Romania (updated 10.07.2019 by the National institute of Health) includes also isolation at home, but imposes reporting of the case to the health authorities.

Page 2, line 20- please define “appropriate hospital”

Page 2, line 25- the study was retrospective, but not case-control

Page 2, line 28-  general information should be presented in backgroud section

Page 2, line 34– please define appropriate supportive treatment with references

Page 2, line 35 – “general recommendations” - please give references

Page 2, line 35, 36, 37, 38- the definition for severe case of hepatitis E in not found in the guideline cited. Please give the correct reference for the definition.

Page 2, line 39, 40- please give a reference for the definition of severe hepatitis A

Page 2, line 44- please define laboratory parameters

Page 2, line 45 – please be more specific on “patient’s presentation and evolution”. What do you mean by subjective parameters?

Page 3, line 1- if the study was retrospective from the electronic database how was the informed consent signed for the study?

**Results**

Page 3, line 17- methods section din not present collecting data for the pediatric patients, the retrospective study included consecutive adult patients (>18 years old).

Page 3, line 18, figure 1- collecting data for all viral hepatitis (viral hepatitis B, C) including  minor patients  was not presented in  methods section.

**Information on data that was not presented in data collection should not appear in results section**!

Page 3, figure 1- the number of hepatitis E and hepatitis A in each year (2017, 2018, 2019) is not presented, only the percentage of un unknown total number of hepatitis A, B, C, E (as mentioned before not presented in the method section).

Page 3, line 19- data collected for transmission source was not mentioned in methods section. What data was collected from the electronic file, as we have a retrospective study?

Page 3- Results section does not present number of severe forms in both groups, though in the results section from the abstract that information was presented.

Page 5, line 5- please present in methods section the chronic medical conditions recorded

Page 5, line 11- please provide information on duration of ribavirin treatment recommended

Page 5, table 2- please provide information on etiology of chronic liver disease, liver cirrhosis, detail the neurologic disease

Page 6, table 3 – MELD- please provide abbreviation in full at first use, provide reference and include it in data collection from the methods section.

Page 6, table 3 – please provide reference for ribavirin therapy recommendation in extrahepatic neurological manifestations of hepatitis E

**Page 7 and 8 - line numbering missing**

**Discussion section**

First paragraph :

 “Unexpected high number of severe and/or lethal cases” not supported by comparison with publications or reports from previous years in the same region, in Romania or neighbouring countries.

“Health care costs” were not analysed in the study.

One can not argue on increase number of patients compared to 2016 as no data on the number of cases in 2016  was provided (though it was mentioned that the same protocol for detection was used in 2016).

Second paragraph:

PCR-based genotyping assays- only PCR-based assays should be mentioned for diagnosis, genotyping is not necessary for diagnosis

The same laboratory request form should be added

 3rd paragraph:

“acute infection has a higher incidence in men” -the study shows a higher hospitalisation proportion of hepatitis E in men than women, as real incidence of the disease is still unknown.

Page 8, 3rd paragraph- severe thrombocytopenia with contraindication to ribavirin was not presented in results section.

Page 8, 4th paragraph- severe hepatitis A, as mentioned before, not presented in results section.

Page 8, 4th paragraph- as more patients with severe form (in number and percentage) and death are present in hepatitis E group compared to hepatitis A group, milder disease in hepatitis E can not be supported.

Page 8, 5th paragraph- no presumption on genotyping can be made in the absence of laboratory data.

Please compare the proportion of severe forms and mortality rate in your study with results of similar studies.

**Conclusions section**

First line- compared to 2017, as no data on previous years is provided.

Line 2- wrong conclusion – as presented before: as more patients with severe form (in number and percentage) and more death are present in hepatitis E group compared to hepatitis A group, milder disease in hepatitis E can not be supported.

Line 3- the benefit of antiviral therapy should not be evaluated from retrospective studies

**The conclusions should be reformulated**

**Minor issues**

Page 2, line 17- EASL- please provide abbreviation in full at first use

Page 2, line 30- there is a grammar mistake: management of **the** patients

Page 3, footnote- please include it as reference at the end of the document

Page 5, line 17- spelling mistake- multiple system organ failure

Page 7- HE- please provide abbreviation in full at first use

4th  paragraph of discussion section- there is a spelling mistake “sample” instead of study