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| **HEPATITIS B** |
| **DEFINITION:**  Hepatitis B is a vaccine-preventable disease, endemic and epidemic worldwide, caused by the Hepatitis B virus (HBV). HBV can cause both acute and chronic liver disease. Chronic infection puts people at high risk of death from cirrhosis and liver cancer. (World Health Organization 2019a).  **REFERENCE:**  World Health Organization (2019a). Hepatitis B. Available at [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hepatitis-b](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hepatitis-b). Accessed 20 November 2019. |
| **ANNOTATIONS:**  **Synonym(s):** acute hepatitis B; chronic hepatitis B; hepatitis B related cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma  **Additional scientific description:**  Hepatitis B is the most serious type of viral hepatitis. In highly endemic areas, HBV, which is highly contagious, is most commonly spread from mother to child at birth (perinatal transmission), or through horizontal transmission (exposure to infected blood), especially from an infected child to an uninfected child during the first five years of life (World Health Organization 2016a). Hepatitis B is also spread by needlestick injury, tattooing, piercing and exposure to infected blood and body fluids, such as saliva and, menstrual, vaginal, and seminal fluids. Sexual transmission of hepatitis B may occur, particularly in unvaccinated men who have sex with men and heterosexual persons with multiple sex partners or contact with sex workers (World Health Organization 2019a).  The incubation period of the hepatitis B virus is 75 days on average, but can vary from 30 to 180 days. Most people do not experience any symptoms when newly infected. However, some people have acute illness with symptoms that last several weeks, including yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice), dark urine, extreme fatigue, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. A small subset of persons with acute hepatitis can develop acute liver failure, which can lead to death (World Health Organization 2019a).  In some people, the hepatitis B virus can also cause a chronic liver infection that can later develop into cirrhosis (a scarring of the liver) or hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer). Infection in adulthood leads to chronic hepatitis in less than 5% of cases, whereas infection in infancy and early childhood leads to chronic hepatitis in about 95% of cases (World Health Organization 2019a).  Laboratory confirmation of hepatitis B diagnosis is essential. A number of blood tests are available to diagnose and monitor people with hepatitis B. They can be used to distinguish acute and chronic infections (World Health Organization 2019a).  **Metrics and numeric limits:**  The prevalence of HBV is highest in the World Health Organization (WHO) Western Pacific Region and the WHO African Region, where 6.2% and 6.1% of the adult population is infected respectively. In the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, the WHO South-East Asia Region and the WHO European Region, an estimated 3.3%, 2.0% and 1.6% of the general population is infected, respectively. And in the WHO Region of the Americas, 0.7% of the population is infected (World Health Organization 2017).  WHO estimates that in 2015, 257 million people were living with chronic hepatitis B infection (defined as hepatitis B surface antigen positive) (World Health Organization 2019). It is estimated that about 887,000 people die each year due to consequences of hepatitis B (World Health Organization 2017).  HBV-HIV coinfection: about 1% of persons living with HBV infection (2.7 million people) are also infected with HIV. Conversely, the global prevalence of HBV infection in HIV-infected persons is 7.4% (World Health Organization 2019a).  The WHO has published surveillance standards for hepatitis B (World Health Organization date unknown).  **Key relevant UN convention/multilateral treaty:**  The International Health Regulations (2005) (World Health Organization 2016b).  **Examples of drivers, outcomes and risk management:**   * Hepatitis B is a major global health problem (World Health Organization 2018). * There is still limited access to diagnosis and treatment of hepatitis B in many resource-constrained settings. In 2016, 10.5% (27 million) infected were aware of their infection. Of those diagnosed, the global treatment coverage is 16.7% (4.5 million). Many people are diagnosed only when they already have advanced liver disease (World Health Organization 2019a; World Health Organization 2019b). * A safe and effective vaccine that offers 98-100% protection against hepatitis B is available and is the mainstay of prevention worldwide (World Health Organization 2019a). * WHO recommends that all blood donations be tested for hepatitis B to ensure blood safety and avoid accidental transmission to people who receive blood products. (World Health Organization 2019a) * For World Hepatitis Day 2019, WHO is focusing on the theme “Invest in eliminating hepatitis” to highlight the need for increased domestic and international funding to scale up hepatitis prevention, testing and treatment services, in order to achieve the 2030 elimination targets (World Health Organization 2019a).   **REFERENCES:**   * World Health Organization (2019a). Hepatitis B. 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