

Abstract

In Kenya hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and its sequelae are common. We followed up 49 hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg)- positive mothers and their newborn infants for 9 months to determine the importance of perinatal transmission in the African and to relate this to the HBe and HBV-DNA status of the mother. Our study shows that perinatal transmission is relatively unimportant in Kenya and that this may be a consequence of the low levels of circulating HBV-DNA in the maternal plasma. These results imply that vaccination without hyperimmune globulin may be adequate to control HBV infection in Kenya