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Hepatitis B Serosurvey Results

Since November 1982, the Division of Public Health systematically has been testing certain populations suspected to be at increased risk of hepatitis B virus infection. The preliminary results presented here provide overall prevalence data of hepatitis B infection for the groups listed. More detailed analyses to derive age, sex, and race specific attack rates will not be possible unless computer data processing becomes available.

Group Tested	HbsAg	(%)	HbcAb	(%)	Total Tested
State Public Health Nurses	0	(0)	7	(10.3)	68
State Laboratory Employees	0	(0)	4	(14.3)	28
Harborview Developmental Center, Valdez					
Staff	4	(2.5)	20	(12.7)	158
Patients	21	(24.4)	77	(89.5)	86
Alaska Psychiatric Institute Patients	0	(0)	16	(16.5)	97
Corrections - Long-term Inmates	3	(0.8)	80	(22.5)	356
Seward Hospital Staff and Wesleyan Nursing Home	1	(1.0)	9	(9.2)	98
Wrangell Hospital Staff	0	(0)	3	(7.3)	41
Nuiqsut (young adults only)	0	(0)	2	(3.2)	62

Group Tested	HbsAg	(%)	HbsAb	(%)	HbcAb	(%)	Positive for any Marker	(%)	Total Tested
Rural School Teachers (637 person-yr exposure)	0	(0)	4	(4)	4	(4)	6	(6)	100
Stony River	9	(12.7)	6	(8.5)	14	(19.7)	18	(25.4)	71
Sheldon's Point	16	(15.5)	39	(37.9)	59	(57.3)	61	(59.2)	103
Russian Mission	21	(11.6)	67	(37.0)	86	(47.5)	89	(49.2)	181
Marshall	24	(10.1)	55	(23.1)	85	(35.7)	88	(37.0)	238

As expected from previous epidemiological studies, the prevalence of hepatitis B virus infection varied widely among these high risk populations. Because of the sporadic distribution of hepatitis B virus infection, it is impossible to predict accurately the prevalence of hepatitis B infection in any population or in population subgroups.

Results of serosurveys can provide accurate information on the prevalence of infection among many subpopulations within high risk groups. Individuals can then make an informed choice about whether or not to receive hepatitis B vaccine based on their community, occupation, and lifestyle, taking into account the documented prevalence of infection in their group.

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