

## SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF HEPATITIS B ANTIBODIES AMONG SUBJECTS IN SOME NIGER DELTA COMMUNITIES: A PUBLIC HEALTH RISK

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The hepatitis B virus (HBV) is a major cause of viral hepatitis which can lead to inflammation of the liver and its prevalence in the tropics such as Nigeria remains a huge public health concern. The prevalence of the hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) which is a component of HBV was determined among indigenes of Ahoada East Local Government Area of Rivers State in the oil-rich Niger Delta Region. A total of 1000 randomly selected subjects from the Community Health Center Edeogha-Ekpeye, Community Health Center Ochigba, Comprehensive Health Center Ahoada, Ahoada General Hospital, Ula-upata, Ahoada Timber Market and Ogbo town were recruited for this study after due consent was obtained. Self and well-structured questionnaires were distributed to the respondents to obtain their socio-demographic data and their blood samples were collected for serological assay for HBsAg using the Acon HBsAg test strips. Nonetheless, 46.40% of the respondents were males and 53.60% were females. The total prevalence of hepatitis infection was 14% out of which 5.7% were males and 8.3% were females. Of those infected, 4.8% were within the age group of 25–34, 4% were within the age group of 15–24, 3.9% were within 35–44 and 1.3% within 45–54. However, in terms of the educational status, 6% of positive cases were those with a senior school certificate, 3.6% were those with the first school leaving certificate, 3.3% had no educational qualification, 1% were BSc holders while 0.1% were MSc holders. Nevertheless, in terms of the occupational status, 3.1% were students, 1.8% farmers, 1.7% applicants,

1.3% civil servants, while 0.3% were fishermen. Furthermore, with respect to marital status, 7.5% were married, 4.9% were widowed, while 1.6% were single. Among those infected, 13.4% of them knew that the use of condoms could prevent HBsAg infection, while 0.6% said they were not aware. Based on the location, Ahoada General Hospital had a high prevalence of 47.14% of the total prevalence, Comprehensive Health Center Ahoada–13.57%, Ula-upata Community–10%, Community Health Center Ochigba–8.57%, Community Health Center Edeogha-Ekpeye and Ogbo town–7.14% and Ahoada Timber Market–6.43%. The studies show that marital status, age and occupation played a huge role in determining the prevalence. The need to strengthen the importance of health education especially in our rural communities to engender behavioral change among the weak and vulnerable subjects in our villages in Niger Delta cannot be over emphasized. It is strongly believed that continuous enlightenment and prompt diagnosis and treatment would help to reduce the epidemic trend in our society.

### Biography

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