

HBV and Liver Cancer in API Americans

(Provided by the Asian Liver Center at Stanford University)

Hepatitis B is the most serious common liver infection in the world

- Hepatitis B (HBV) is a serious viral infection that attacks the liver, and can lead to premature death from liver cancer or liver failure.
- HBV can be transmitted from an infected mother to her child at birth, through unprotected sex or contaminated blood (sharing toothbrushes, razors, needles for tattoos/piercings)
- 80% of all primary liver cancer worldwide is caused by hepatitis B.
- HBV is second only to smoking tobacco in causing the most cancer deaths in the world.

HBV is more common and 100x more infectious than HIV

- Worldwide: 350-400 million people in the world have chronic HBV vs. 40 million living with HIV/AIDS.
- About 2/3 of those with chronic HBV infection in the world live in Asia.
- In the U.S., an estimated 1.4 million people are living with chronic HBV (compared with 400,000 living with HIV/AIDS) and over 60% are Asian.

Greatest health disparity between Asian and Caucasian Americans: HBV and Liver Cancer

- In the U.S., about 1 in 10 foreign born Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Americans has chronic HBV compared with 1 in 1000 Caucasian Americans.
- Liver cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in API men living in the U.S.

HBV is a silent killer in the API community

- Many Asians are infected at birth or during early childhood and are unaware of their infection because they show no symptoms and may have normal blood tests for liver functions.
- Diagnosis of chronic hepatitis B can only be made with a specific blood test for hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg).
- Without appropriate monitoring or treatment, 1 in 4 of those with chronic HBV infection will die of liver cancer or liver failure.
- In the U.S., approximately 10-15 people die every day from HBV infection.

Hepatitis B vaccine is the “first anti-cancer vaccine”

- Hepatitis B is preventable with a vaccine that has been available for over 20 years.
- The 3-shot hepatitis B vaccine can potentially provide lifelong protection from HBV infection
- The hepatitis B vaccine is so effective in preventing HBV and liver cancer that it is known as the “first anti-cancer vaccine.”

Why is it important to promote HBV awareness and testing?

- To identify the 1 in 10 API Americans who don't know they are infected.
- To identify those who are unprotected, so they can get vaccinated against HBV.

References

Asian Liver Center at Stanford University
World Health Organization
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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