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## Prevalence of occult HBV infection in haemodialysis patients with chronic HCV in the province of Yazd (Iran)

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**Background and Aim:** Occult hepatitis B is defined by the presence of HBV DNA in serum or liver in the absence of HBs Ag. Low serum HBV DNA titers, in the range of 100 to 1000 copies/ml, are typical in occult HBV infection. HBV infection can lead to chronic disease, cirrhosis and liver cancer. For this reason the aim of this research was to find out the prevalence and clinical effects of occult HBV infection in haemodialysis patients with chronic HCV in Yazd (Iran). **Methods:** 34 chronic hemodialysis patients with negative HBs Ag, and positive anti-HCV were included in the study. These patients were divided into two groups: HCV-RNA positive and HCV-RNA negative, based on the results of HCV-RNA PCR. HBV-DNA was studied using the PCR method in both groups. **Results:** None of the 13 HCV-RNA positive patients and 21 HCV-RNA negative patients revealed HBV-DNA in serum by PCR method. The average age was  $50.0 \pm 10.0$  in the HCV-RNA positive group and  $28 \pm 11.0$  in the HCV-RNA negative group. **Conclusion:** The prevalence of occult HBV infection is not high in haemodialysis patients with chronic HCV in Yazd (Iran). This result of our study has to be evaluated in consideration of the interaction between HBs Ag positivity (7%-11%) and frequency of HBV mutants in Yazd (Iran).

**Keywords:** Occult HBV infection, Chronic HCV, Haemodialysis, Yazd