

## Hepatitis A

### Definition of Hepatitis A

- Acute infectious disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis A virus

### Epidemiology of Hepatitis A

- Predominantly affects children and young adults
- Worldwide but more common in areas of poor sanitation
- Faeco-oral spread, usually from contaminated water or shellfish

### Causes of Hepatitis A

- Hepatitis A virus is a single-stranded RNA picornavirus
- Incubation period 15-50 days

### Presentations of Hepatitis A

- Initially
  - Generally unwell
  - Nausea, anorexia
- After 1-2 weeks
  - Transient rash
  - Jaundice
    - Dark urine/pale stools due to intrahepatic cholestasis
  - Hepatomegaly
  - Lymphadenopathy
  - Splenomegaly in 10%
- Symptoms usually resolve in 3-6 weeks
- Progression to fulminant liver failure occurs in only 0.1% cases

### Differential diagnosis of Hepatitis A

- Acute hepatitis B
- Drug induced hepatitis
- Alcoholic hepatitis
- Ischaemic hepatitis

### Initial management of Hepatitis A

- Bloods:
  - FBC, U+Es, clotting
  - LFTs: often a large transaminase rise (can be >1000)
  - Viral screen (including Hep B, Hep C, HIV)
    - Hep A IgM indicates acute infection
  - Malaria screen if febrile and from affected area
- Ultrasound liver
- Rest and supportive treatment
- Avoid alcohol

**Further management of Hepatitis A**

- Hepatitis A vaccine is available and is very effective

**Complications of Hepatitis A**

- Fulminant liver failure is rare: 0.1%

**Prognosis of Hepatitis A**

- Good unless liver necrosis with fulminant liver failure occurs
- Does not progress to chronic liver disease

**Common questions concerning Hepatitis A****How does Hepatitis A present?**

- General malaise and non-specific unwellness
- Nausea, anorexia
- After 1-2 weeks
  - Transient rash
  - Jaundice
    - Dark urine/pale stools due to intrahepatic cholestasis
  - Hepatomegaly
  - Lymphadenopathy
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- Symptoms usually resolve in 3-6 weeks

**What is the incubation period of Hepatitis A?**

- 15-50 days

**How is Hepatitis A spread?**

- Faeco-oral spread
- From contaminated water or shellfish