SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF METHODS FOR THE SURVEILLANCE OF HEPATITIS B VIRUS IN LOW PREVALENCE COUNTRIES, 2017

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Background: Robust and comprehensive hepatitis B surveillance systems are needed to monitor implementation of the Global Health Sector Strategy on Viral Hepatitis 2016–2021, which set the goal to eliminate hepatitis B as a public health threat by 2030. We aimed to synthesise the methods hepatitis of B surveillance systems in low prevalence counties and determine their alignment with the Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Guide.

Methods: A systematic review was conducted to identify reports that described hepatitis B surveillance systems in low prevalence settings. The purpose of surveillance systems were classified as: 1) to detect outbreaks, monitor trends in incidence and identify risk factors for new infections; 2) to estimate the prevalence of chronic infections and monitor trends in the general population and in sentinel groups; and 3) to estimate the burden of sequelae of chronic hepatitis.

Results: Of 1900 articles retrieved from database searches, 29 met the inclusion criteria and an additional 12 records were identified; 41 were records in this review. Several reports described more than one system, and 52 surveillance systems were described in total. The majority (n=27) of surveillance systems were the national passive surveillance system involving case notification. Seven systems collected denominator testing data (that is, both positive and negative test results). Most (n=42) surveillance system collected data that met the first purpose defined in the Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Guide. Fewer surveillance systems collected data to meet the second objective (n=33) and third (n=10) purpose.

Conclusion: The utility of hepatitis B surveillance systems would be greatly enhanced through expanding their scope to collect data related to the burden of sequelae of chronic hepatitis B infection, collection of denominator testing data and improved reporting of trends among sentinel groups.

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