

# **The prevalence of hepatitis C virus antibodies in renal patients, blood donors and patients with chronic liver disease in Kenya**

## **Abstract:**

We tested serum samples from four categories of patients with nephrological problems (nephrotic syndrome, stable chronic renal failure, haemodialysis patients and renal transplant recipients), patients with chronic liver disease and volunteer blood donors for the presence of antibody to hepatitis C virus (HCV). Screening was done by second-generation enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) and confirmation with second-generation recombinant immunoblot assay (RIBA). Of all the renal patients, only 6.3% of the transplant patients tested positive for anti-HCV, while in patients with chronic liver disease anti-HCV was detected in 2.6% of the patients with chronic hepatitis and in none with liver cirrhosis or hepatocellular carcinoma. This finding of low prevalence in these patient groups was not in keeping with findings in studies done elsewhere. Our anti-HCV prevalence of 0.9% in blood donors was comparable to that found in Europe, USA and Taiwan. We recommend that the low prevalence of anti-HCV in some of our high risk groups should not lead to complacency and hence further studies are necessary to evaluate the infectivity of anti-HCV positive patients and the potential for cross infection.