

he Los Angeles area: a report of 126 cases

de cock, km; Govindarajan, S; Redeker, AG; Chin, KP

Abstract:

Abstract We describe the clinical course in 126 patients with delta hepatitis who have been evaluated in Los Angeles since 1967. In approximately two thirds of all patients, delta infection was associated with chronic hepatitis B. Most patients were members of two major risk groups: 65.9% were intravenous drug abusers, 11.9% were male homosexuals, and another 9.5% were both intravenous drug users and male homosexuals. The overall case fatality rate was 23%; fulminant hepatitis caused 17 of 29 (59%) deaths. Advanced liver disease occurred significantly more frequently in patients who had established chronic delta infections than in hepatitis B virus carriers with recent delta superinfections. Nonfatal infections with both hepatitis B virus and delta hepatitis virus resulted in clearance of both agents, whereas superinfection in carriers of chronic hepatitis B virus usually led to chronic delta hepatitis. Spontaneous loss of chronic delta infection was not observed. Delta hepatitis, a longstanding infection seen in patients in the Los Angeles area, has caused fulminant hepatitis and progressive liver disease in both intravenous drug users and male homosexuals.