

Reviewer's Comment:

The study by El Shabrawi et al. focuses on the prevalence of HBsAg among 2000 Egyptian pregnant women. The paper is not at all innovative and deserves several major criticisms.

1. The study was a cross sectional one. Authors claimed that women were chosen randomly, along 14 months, among those attending the Obstetric Dept. for HBV screening. Amazingly however, also women aware of their HBsAg positivity were included (page 3 lines 16-18). Thus, the selection was not at all random! Even more amazingly, the actual number of those already tested positive for HBsAg is not at all reported! That represents a terrific recruitment bias definitely precluding paper consideration.
2. Results section. Line 2: 35/2000 tested positive at rapid test but 32 were actually confirmed =1.6%.

Line 4: " thirty-five confirmed HBsAg positive"?! that is clearly in contrast with the previous statement, denoting the lack of any accurate paper re-reading.

Page 5 lines 1-2: controls were chosen according to a ratio of 2:1. The number of true positive is 32, thus, once again, the number of controls should have been 64 and not 70.

3. results should have been condensed into few lines and the repetition of data should have been avoided. Accordingly, table 1 is useless as table 2 (data are already in the text), table 3 (as before), table 5 and table 6.
4. data from table 4 should be limited to those data actually potentially relevant (lines 2-3-4-5 and 6), deserving appropriate comments in the text.

Overall, a very poor article, unsuitable for any further consideration.

Author's Feedback:

Thanks for your valuable comments; these points are all considered in the revised paper.

1 & 2 - we actually choose our patients randomly 2000 women attending the outpatient department for antenatal care, out of them 35 were positive by the rapid test and out of them only 32 were positive by the confirmatory test. We added to these 32 confirmed HBV positive pregnant mothers 3 known HBV positive mothers coming to seek for immunoprophylaxis of their newborns so the total is 35 cases to compare them with 70 controls to know what are the possible risk factors for acquiring HBV infection in these women.

3 & 4 – all repeated data are removed and redundancy is considered.

Regarding the article as a whole, it is considered as a pilot study, to help in implementing a national program by the Ministry of Health (MOH) for prevention of vertical transmission of HBV as the schedule of HBV vaccine here in our country is at the age of 2, 4, 6 months.