

Current major event

Acute Jaundice Syndrome cases on the rise in Jordan

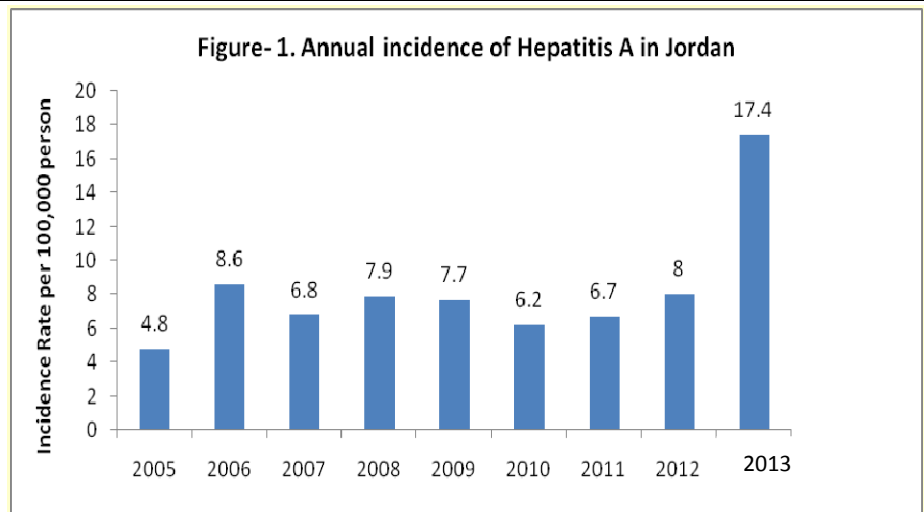
Cases of Acute Jaundice Syndrome (AJS) have registered an unusual rise in recent months in Jordan, specially in its northern governorate. The district of North Badya has recorded the highest incidence of cases amongst other districts.

Editorial note

Acute viral hepatitis caused by hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection is endemic in Jordan. The historical trend of the disease, traditionally, shows a higher incidence of cases in the northern region than in the rest of the kingdom. A number of past epidemiological descriptive studies have reported an increase in incidence of HAV cases from 6.4/100,000 populations to about 7.9 cases per 100,000 populations in 2008. The northern region of the Kingdom, mainly the Mafraq area has traditionally reported higher incidence rate than rest of the country.

Since August 2013, the district of North Badya started to report higher number of suspected AJS cases. The cases continued to increase thereafter and recently a field investigation was carried out jointly by a team of WHO and the Ministry of Health in Jordan to determine the cause of the unusual increase, aetiology of the cases and to recommend an appropriate public health control measures. The team collected descriptive epidemiological data, assessed the water and sanitation situation in the district and collected water samples from the households of the suspected cases.

The field investigation revealed that the suspected cases of AJS have nearly doubled in the areas compared to the previous two years (*Please see the table and figure-1*) and majority of the cases (45%) were under 10 years of age. Most of the cases were self-limiting and resolved spontaneously without the need of any medication or treatment. Spatial distribution patterns of cases showed clustering of cases mainly in one of the villages of



Reported Cases of HAV in Jordan (2005-2013)

Year	Reported cases	Incidence rate (cases/100,000)
2005	250	4.8
2006	500	8.6
2007	400	6.8
2008	490	7.9
2009	500	7.7
2010	400	6.2
2011	450	6.7
2012	600	8
2013	1200	17.4

district (Sabah village). Blood samples were collected from the suspected cases and is awaiting confirmation by serology.

Though the laboratory confirmation is pending, the epidemiological and clinical features of the recent cases of AJS reported in Jordan favour infection caused by HAV, though other infections, principally hepatitis E virus (HEV) causing acute viral hepatitis need to be ruled out.

Whatever the aetiology of infection causing these high number of AJS cases, appropriate public health interventions like improving pure water and safe sanitation services as well as hygiene promotions needs to be scaled up as cases continue to escalate and clustering of cases indicate a localized outbreak of acute viral hepatitis in the region.

Update on outbreaks

Novel Coronavirus in Qatar, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates; **Wild poliovirus** in Syria; **Yellow fever** in Sudan

Current public health events of international concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Avian influenza

Egypt	[173 (63), 36.4%]
Indonesia	[192 (160), 83.3 %]
Viet Nam	[125 (62), 49.6%]
Cambodia	[31 (27), 87.1%]
Global total	[629 (375), 59.6%]

Hepatitis E

South Sudan	[12,718 (251), 1.9%]
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Novel Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

Saudi Arabia	[141 (57), 40%]
Kuwait	[2 (0)]
Qatar	[10 (2), 20%]
UAE	[10 (3), 30 %]

Yellow fever

Sudan	[49 (15), 32%]
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Crimen-Congo haemorrhagic fever

Pakistan	[88 (18), 20%]
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Wild poliovirus

Syria	[17 (0)]
Somalia	[180 (0)]
Cameroon	[2 (0)]

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate; # Suspected cases