

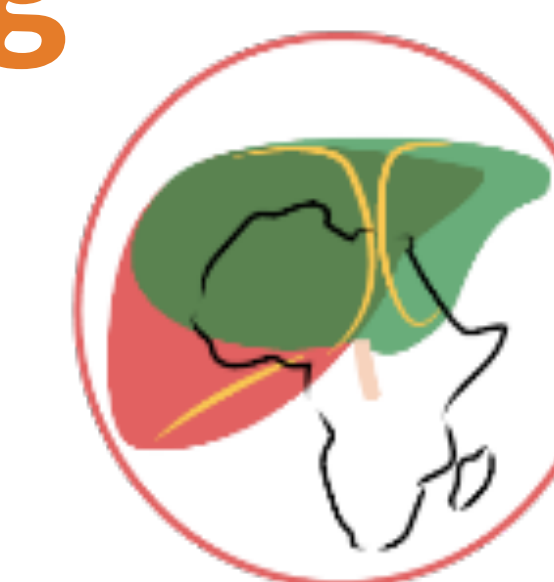
HBV awareness and self-reported testing and vaccination in Ghanaian migrants living in the greater Barcelona area participating in a community-based intervention

Camila A Picchio^{1*}, Daniel Kwakye Nomah², Jeffrey V Lazarus¹

1. Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal), Hospital Clínic, University of Barcelona
2. Center for Epidemiological Studies on HIV/AIDS and STIs in Catalonia (CEEISCAT), Barcelona, Spain

*Contact: Camila.picchio@isglobal.org

 @capicchio @ dannomah @JVLazarus



COLDA 2020 - VIRTUAL
CONFERENCE ON LIVER DISEASE IN AFRICA

10 - 12 SEPTEMBER 2020

Poster #16

BACKGROUND & AIM

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection affects an estimated 250 million people worldwide and disproportionately affects those in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and south-East Asia. Migrants from these high-endemic areas may be unaware of their HBV status due to the lack of reliable testing in their home countries and under-utilization of health services in their host countries. As such, strategies for testing and treating migrant populations are crucial to eliminate HBV as a major public health threat by 2030, as set out by the World Health Organization.

This study aims to report HBV awareness as well as past testing and vaccination practices of Ghanaian migrants in Barcelona to design a community-based HBV intervention for this community.

METHODS

Between April and September 2019, migrants were screened in community-based settings (churches and community centers) in the greater Barcelona area for diabetes and hypertension. Height, weight, and fasting blood glucose levels were collected. A survey was also administered to participants to collect risk factor data. Topics of the questions included HBV awareness, self-reported testing and vaccination practices, health service utilization in the past three months, and health insurance card possession. Standard descriptive analysis was performed to examine differences between groups utilizing the chi-squared significant test with alpha set at 0.05.

CONCLUSIONS

Most Ghanaian migrants in the Barcelona area have heard about HBV, yet the majority have never been tested despite coming from a high-endemic country. Testing initiatives should be strengthened in both Ghana and Spain. To eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat, further studies are needed to investigate HBV seroprevalence and knowledge levels in this population, including community-based prevention, testing, and vaccination strategies.

RESULTS

210 persons were included in the study (41% female; mean age 39 [SD 11.35]; and 20% completed greater than secondary school). The mean years since arrival to Spain was 12 [SD 6.8] and 52 (24.8%) participants had arrived within the last five years. The majority (75%) of the respondents had heard of HBV, yet 119 (57%) had never been tested for HBV before, and 39 (19%) did not know/remember. One in 10 (n=20) respondents did not have public health insurance cards and 113 (54.3%) had never received any type of vaccine since arriving to Spain. Those who reported being aware of HBV were more likely to have been tested for HBV before compared to those who had not (31.9% vs. 3.8%; $p < 0.001$). Sex, having been diagnosed with hypertension, having a family history of cardiovascular disease, or body mass index did not show any statistically significant differences in HBV testing practices. However, those who arrived to Spain over 16 years ago were more likely to have never been tested for HBV before compared to other age groups (85%; $p = 0.012$) (**Table 1**). The vast majority of participants (86.2%) responded that they would like to receive community-based testing and vaccination for HBV.

Table 1. Description of self-reported HBV testing among 210 Ghanaian migrants in the greater Barcelona area, 2019.

	N =210	n(%)	p-value
Sex			
Female	86	24 (27.9)	0.603
Male	124	28 (22.6)	
Age			
18-25	29	7 (24.1)	0.213
26-32	28	12 (42.9)	
33-40	37	12 (32.4)	
41-49	80	16 (20)	
50-59	29	5 (17.2)	
60+	7	0 (0)	
Years since arrival in Spain			
1-5 years	52	22 (42.3)	0.012
6-10 years	33	6 (18.2)	
11-15 years	45	11 (24.4)	
16-20 years	60	9 (15)	
21+ years	20	4 (20)	
Level of education			
No education	9	1 (11.1)	0.052
Primary school	21	3 (14.3)	
Junior secondary	77	15 (19.5)	
Senior secondary	63	20 (31.7)	
College	4	0 (0)	
University	20	10 (50)	
Vocational	16	12 (75)	
Reported HBV awareness	157	50 (31.9)	<0.001
Reported vaccination since arrival in Spain	87	18 (20.7)	0.029
Confirmed hypertension diagnosis	56	7 (12.5)	0.050
Family history of cardiovascular disease	25	5 (20)	0.330
Body mass index (BMI)			
Underweight	1	0 (0)	0.339
Normal	64	21 (32.8)	
Overweight	102	21 (20.6)	
Obese	43	10 (23.3)	
Possession of a health card	190	42 (22.1)	0.017