

# Author Query Form

Journal: LIV

Article: 15574

Dear Author,

During the copyediting of your manuscript, the following queries arose.

Please refer to the query reference callout numbers in the page proofs and respond.

Please remember illegible or unclear comments and corrections may delay publication.

Many thanks for your assistance.

**AUTHOR:** Please note that missing content in references have been updated where we have been able to match the missing elements without ambiguity against a standard citation database, to meet the reference style requirements of the journal. It is your responsibility to check and ensure that all listed references are complete and accurate.

Query reference	Query	Remarks
1	AUTHOR: Please provide full postal address for corresponding author.	
2	AUTHOR: Please provide missing city and country for affiliation 1.	

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Overcoming the challenges of eliminating viral hepatitis in low- and middle-income countries

I find the recent article by Musabaev Erkin et al.<sup>1</sup> to be very interesting. In this article, the authors demonstrate that the feasibility of large-scale general population screening and task shifting in low- and middle-income countries. In this article, the authors used rapid tests for screening of 60 769 people for HCV and HBV over 6 months and permitted outdoor testing during the COVID-19 pandemic along with COVID testing. This study suggested that for elimination of viral hepatitis, large screening programmes need to be preceded by awareness campaign to minimize loss to follow-up. In addition, multiple trainings are needed for general practitioners to bolster their skills to talk to patients about treatment.

While reading this article, I noticed few areas that if addressed will lead to even better insight to overcome the challenges of eliminating viral hepatitis in low- and middle-income countries such as:

1. According to our view, the future of viral hepatitis elimination largely depends upon many factors but among all the prevention of mother to baby of vertical transmission is one of the main cause of chronic hepatitis B.<sup>2-4</sup> This study authors screened the adult individual; it will be more insightful if pregnant women were included in this study.
2. I agree with the authors that HBV screening is an important public health measure, particularly in areas where HBV is endemic. For the elimination of HBV, the rate of occult hepatitis B (OHB) in that area is also very important. Globally, the rate of OHB is not well-established, as there are significant variations in the prevalence of OHB across different populations and geographic regions. Studies have reported varying rates of OHB across different populations and geographic regions.<sup>5</sup>
3. The issue of high drug pricing persists in many developed countries, underscoring the pressing need to discover a highly efficacious treatment for the hepatitis B virus.
4. Insufficient financial resources represent a significant obstacle to achieving hepatitis elimination.
5. Another important aspect is rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) are commonly used for HBV screening because they are inexpensive, easy to use and provide rapid results. However, the accuracy of RDTs can vary depending on factors such as the quality of the test, the prevalence of HBV in the population being screened and the individual's immune status. In general, RDTs are less sensitive than laboratory-based assays, which can lead to false-negative results. Therefore,

RDTs can be a useful tool for large-scale screening programmes, but they should be used in conjunction with confirmatory testing (such as laboratory-based assays) to ensure accurate diagnosis.

To reach the WHO targets to the elimination of viral hepatitis by 2030, comprehensive and coordinated global effort is needed such as prevention of new infections, early diagnosis, access to treatment, integrated management of hepatitis, innovation and research. This includes promoting research to better understand the burden of viral hepatitis and to develop new prevention, diagnostic and treatment tools.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Author has no conflict of interest.

Ashish Kumar Vyas 

JC Martin Center for Liver Research and Innovations <sup>2</sup>

## Correspondence <sup>1</sup>

Ashish Kumar Vyas, JC Martin Center for Liver Research and Innovations.


Email: [a88\\_ashish@yahoo.co.in](mailto:a88_ashish@yahoo.co.in)

## ORCID

Ashish Kumar Vyas  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6333-0195>

## REFERENCES

1. Musabaev E, Estes C, Sadirova S, et al. Viral hepatitis elimination challenges in low-and middle-income countries-Uzbekistan Hepatitis Elimination Program (UHEP). *Liver Int.* 2023;43:773-784.
2. Vyas AK, Ramakrishna U, Sen B, et al. Placental expression of asialoglycoprotein receptor associated with hepatitis B virus transmission from mother to child. *Liver Int.* 2018;38(12):2149-2158.
3. Vyas AK, Negi P, Patra S, et al. Maternal immunity influences vertical transmission of hepatitis B to newborns. *Hepatol Commun.* 2019;3(6):795-811.
4. Garg G, Meenu MN, Patel K, et al. Presence of entry receptors and viral markers suggest a low level of placental replication of hepatitis B virus in a proportion of pregnant women infected with chronic hepatitis B. *Sci Rep.* 2022;12(1):17795.
5. Allain JP. Global epidemiology of occult HBV infection. *Ann Blood.* 2017;2(7):1-3.

	LIV	15574	WILEY	Dispatch: 31-3-2023	CE: Lenard S
Journal Name	LIV	Manuscript No.		No. of pages: 1	PE: Maheswari S.