Background: This cross-sectional study was undertaken between March and December 2005, to determine the prevalence of hepatitis C virus infection among patients with chronic hepatitis B at the Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH), Jos. The study was conducted to also elucidate the association between the two viruses due to paucity of local data on the subject.

Methods: 100 patients with chronic HBV infection based on persistence of HBsAg for more than 6 months admitted into the Gastroenterology unit, who satisfied the inclusion criteria, were recruited into the study. The sera of the study subjects were checked for anti-HCV using an enzyme immuno assay method (ELISA-3). They all had liver biopsy to determine the extent of liver disease.

Results: The results showed that the prevalence of anti-HCV among chronic HBV patients was 10.0%. Co infected patients were significantly older than those with HBV infection alone. There was no significant statistical difference (P> 0.05) in the histologic activity between co-infected patients and those with HBV infection alone. There were no definite characteristic findings in those infected with one or both viral agents.

Conclusion: The prevalence of anti-HCV among chronic HBV patients in JUTH is comparable to that seen in other areas hyper-endemic for HBV infection. Concomitant HCV infection occurs in patients with chronic hepatitis B in Jos, Nigeria. However, liver
disease seems to be less severe in patients with dual HBV/HCV infection. This suggests that HCV plays a minor role in the course of persistent liver disease.