Summary

Background: Hepatitis B viral infection is a global health problem. There are over 350 million chronic carriers worldwide and causes about 1 million deaths annually. It is an important cause of chronic liver disease in our environment. Chronic HBV infection may progress to liver cirrhosis, hepatocellular carcinoma and death.

Dual infection of HBV and HDV leads to a more progressive liver disease with poorer outcome.

Objectives: The study aimed at determining the prevalence of HDV in HBsAg positive chronic liver disease patients at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital. It also sought to assess the risk factors for HBV/HDV dual infection and evaluate the association between HDV and the severity of liver disease.

Methods: Ninety three patients with HBV associated chronic liver disease were recruited into the study. Age and sex matched HBV asymptomatic (clinical and biochemical) controls of equal sample size were also recruited from the hospital. Clinical assessment, liver function tests, abdominal ultrasonography were done for the recruited cases and controls while liver biopsy was done for the cases only. All subjects were screened for IgG anti-HDV antibody.

Results: Four of the 93 cases (4.3%), and none of the 93 controls (0%) tested positive to IgG anti-HDV antibody. The mean age of the cases was 38.87± 11.37 years. Sixteen (17.2%) had hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), Thirty three (35.5%) had liver cirrhosis while forty four (47.3%) cases had chronic hepatitis.

Conclusion: The prevalence of HBV – HDV co-infection was in low in our study population. Efforts must, therefore, be geared towards shielding the people from risky lifestyle and practices for HDV infection in addition to universal immunization with hepatitis B vaccine.