Merlin disease code: 07010 Hepatitis A

Merlin extended data required

Background

Hepatitis A is a vaccine-preventable, communicable disease of the liver caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). Symptoms most commonly include fever, headache, malaise, anorexia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, or dark urine followed in a few days by jaundice.

Clinical criteria for case classification

All of the following:

- Discrete onset of any sign or symptom consistent with acute viral hepatitis;
- **And** one or more of the following:
    - Jaundice,
    - **Or** bilirubin level ≥3.0 mg/dL,
    - **Or** serum alanine aminotransferase (ALT) level >200 IU/L;
- **And** the absence of a more likely diagnosis.

Laboratory criteria for case classification

Confirmatory:

Positive nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) for HAV RNA (e.g., PCR or genotyping) in the absence of a negative IgM antibody to HAV (IgM anti-HAV) or NAAT result from a public health laboratory.

Presumptive:

Positive IgM anti-HAV.

Epidemiological criteria for case classification

A person who is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed hepatitis A case (i.e., household or sexual contact with an infected person during the 15–50 days before the onset of symptoms).

Case classification

Confirmed:

One or more of the following:

- A person with confirmatory laboratory criteria,
- **Or** a person with clinical criteria and presumptive laboratory criteria,
- **Or** a person with clinical criteria and epidemiological criteria.

Criteria to distinguish a new case from previous reports

Hepatitis A is usually self-limiting and does not result in chronic infection. However, up to 10% of people infected with HAV may experience a relapse during the 6 months after acute illnesses. Do not create a new Merlin case for positive HAV results received within 6 months of an existing case.

Comments

A hepatitis A case should not be created in Merlin if there is an alternate more likely diagnosis.
Report all available liver enzyme results for every case under liver function tests (Merlin disease code: 00000).