

Merlin disease code: 07058 Hepatitis C, Perinatal

No paper case report form
No Merlin extended data

Background

Perinatal hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection in pediatric patients may range from asymptomatic to fulminant hepatitis.

Clinical criteria for case classification

Not applicable.

Laboratory criteria for case classification

Confirmatory:

Either of the following:

- Positive nucleic acid test (NAT) for HCV RNA (including quantitative, qualitative, or genotype testing)
- **Or** positive HCV antigen test (if and when an FDA-approved test for HCV antigen is available).

Supportive:

Both of the following:

- Positive HCV antibody (anti-HCV)
- **And** the absence of a negative HCV NAT.

Epidemiological criteria for case classification

A child ≤ 36 months old not known to be exposed to HCV via a mechanism other than perinatal transmission (e.g., not acquired via health care exposure or household contact). This would include situations where the mother's HCV infection status is unknown (e.g., closed adoptions).

Case classification

Confirmed:

A child ≥ 2 months old and ≤ 36 months old with confirmatory laboratory criteria and epidemiologic criteria.

Probable:

A child < 2 months old with confirmatory laboratory criteria and epidemiologic criteria.

Suspect:

A child ≥ 2 months old and ≤ 36 with supportive laboratory criteria and epidemiological criteria.

Criteria to distinguish a new case from previous reports

Not applicable.

Hepatitis C, Perinatal (Continued)

Comments

There is no safe and effective intervention known to prevent vertical transmission of HCV from mother to fetus or baby during pregnancy or childbirth. Approximately 75% of children who are vertically infected with HCV will develop chronic hepatitis C and should be referred for further evaluation and follow-up. HCV vertical transmission is higher in those who are born to HIV-infected mothers.

Follow-up testing should be prioritized for all suspect cases to identify true perinatal infections. Antibody testing alone can reflect the mother's infection rather than true infection in an infant. Follow-up should include contacting the primary care giver and provider to ensure confirmatory testing is conducted.

Children ≤ 36 months old should only be reported as perinatal hepatitis C (Merlin disease code: 07058), not acute hepatitis C (Merlin disease code: 07051) or chronic hepatitis C (Merlin disease code: 07054) **unless** there is evidence that the case was exposed to HCV via a mechanism other than perinatal transmission (e.g., was acquired via health care exposure). Test results prior to 2 months of age should not be used for classification.

Event date should be based on earliest relevant laboratory test date within the 2 to 36 month window.