# Bhutanese Refugees: A Threat to Nepalese regarding HBV Infection

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**Background**

The carrier rate of Hepatitis B surface antigen is 6% in Bhutan and 1% in Nepal as per World Health Organization 1997 report. Since outbreaks of viral hepatitis are also known, its high prevalence in a migrated community if any may be a potential threat to the rest of the local people. So this study was carried out on Bhutanese refugees living in refugee camps located in Eastern region of Nepal to find out the prevalence of Hepatitis B surface antigen carrier rate among them.

**Methods**

This prospective sero-epidemiological study was carried out in Beldangl II camp. With the help of semi-structured questionnaire, 500 volunteers enrolled, were interviewed for the risk factors for Hepatitis B virus transmission. Blood samples of 467 samples were tested for Hepatitis B surface antigen by immunoassay based on immunochromatographic sandwich principle.

**Results**

Out of 467 samples, 4 were positive for Hepatitis B surface antigen, an incidence of 0.85%.

**Conclusions**

Hepatitis B surface antigen carrier rate was found to be low in Bhutanese refugees. It was also found that they were not engaged in any practice that could increase the chances of Hepatitis B virus transmission. Thus, this study shows that, the refugees are not a threat to the local people as far as Hepatitis B virus transmission is concerned.

**Keywords:** Bhutanese refugees; carrier rate; hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg); hepatitis B virus (HBV).