

## Short Communication

# Spread of Hepatitis A in Masyaf City and its Countryside in Syria: A Brief Reading

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## Abstract

Hepatitis A is an infectious viral disease that affects all ages. Since September 2022, a large spread of hepatitis A cases has been reported in a Syrian city called Masyaf and its countryside as well, which recorded mass infections with the disease. Most of the cases were suffering from abdominal pain accompanied by fatigue, fatigue and vomiting, according to the Syrian Ministry of Health, the reason was the dependence of the Masyafian region on natural water sources for drinking and agriculture, which later turned out to be contaminated with HAV virus, and the reason for recording these many cases in that city is attributed to the lack of awareness among people of the need to sterilize any water source before using it and for other reasons that were mentioned within the article.

**Keywords:** Hepatitis A; Syria; Masyaf; Countryside; Water; Spread; Cases

## Introduction

Hepatitis A is an acute hepatitis caused by the Hepatitis A Virus (HAV). Many cases have few. And the infection can range in severity from a mild to a severe illness that could last for several months [1]. The incubation period for HAV virus ranges from two to six weeks, the World Health Organization (WHO) said that there are 1.5 million cases of Hepatitis A virus (HAV) infections every year worldwide [2]. HAV virus is transmitted by eating contaminated foods with the feces of a person infected with the virus, and it may be transmitted through blood. The HAV virus can also survive for months in water, and it is resistant to drought, and can live at temperatures up to 60 degrees Celsius [3,4].

Symptoms of the disease appear usually within 2 to 6 weeks of infection with the virus, however, there are people infected with the virus who may not show any symptoms. And the symptoms include: tiredness and exhaustion, fever, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, loss of appetite, diarrhea, yellowing of the skin, weight loss and skin itching. Unfortunately, there is no specific treatment for hepatitis A, and the patient usually recovers within 12 to 20 days of the onset of symptoms. However, patients are advised to follow certain measures to speed up their recovery and prevent the disease from progressing, such as avoiding fatty foods and alcohol and drinking plenty of fluids [5].

## Prevention Methods

The best way of prevention of this disease is vaccination, which

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is given safely to all people, even children. And general prevention methods include: Sterilization of drinking water sources by adding chlorine.

- Maintaining general hygiene.
- Sterilization of drinking water sources by adding chlorine.
- Washing hands after using the bathroom.
- Making sure to wash vegetables and fruits before eating them and avoid eating food that is not well cooked.
- Spreading awareness among people of the importance of not drinking water from natural sources without sterilization [5,6].

## Spread of Hepatitis A (HAV) in Syria

Usually, Syria records mass infections with hepatitis A, especially in rural areas that depend for drinking and watering their crops on natural water sources such as rivers and wells every year.

Recently, we noticed a large spread of hepatitis A in Masyaf city and its countryside (a Syrian city in Hama governorate), as many patients visited hospitals and clinics in the city and they were diagnosed with hepatitis A.

Since September 2022, several cases of abdominal pain and vomiting accompanied by fatigue and fatigue were recorded in Masyaf city (Syria) and its countryside, which later turned out to be cases of hepatitis A. According to the Hama Governorate Health Directorate and the Syrian Ministry of Health, dozens of hepatitis A infections have been recorded in the village of Al-Bayadiyah in Masyaf countryside and other villages, in addition to dozens of infections in the city, almost all of them were recorded within only three months [7]. The reason behind recording these mass cases of hepatitis A is due to the dependence of Masyaf and its villages on natural water for drinking and agriculture, especially wells, which later turned out to be contaminated with HAV virus due to the leakage of sewage into it, and people's lack of awareness of the need to sterilize groundwater, which they considered it and safe to use.

## Conclusion

In fact, this problem faces Syria in general and the Masyaf city in particular every year during the season of groundwater flooding and summer, because people are not convinced of the importance of taking vaccinations on the one hand and the need to sterilize any water source before using it on the other hand, in addition to the large number of random urbanization in those areas, which led to In turn, sewage water leaked into many natural water sources used by the residents there.

In addition to social habits that lead to a lot of contact with infected people without awareness of that and thus increasing the infection numbers, and perhaps people's neglect of their health due to the poor financial and service situation in Syria has made matters worse.

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