Bias may Affect Results of Reported Studies from Referral Centers

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Dear Editor

Recently, we read the article by SA Mousavian et al. in your journal (1). Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is the most common infection among poly-transfused patients. All patients who have received blood or blood products prior to 1985 have been exposed to HCV; approximately all are HCV-Ab positive (2). The HCV prevalence amongst Iranians has been estimated at 0.16%, which varies in different parts of the country. The highest rate is in Golestan Province, which has a prevalence of more than 1% (3). Many studies have reported various prevalence rates of HCV infection among patients with inherited coagulation disorders who reside in different areas of Iran. The overall prevalence of HCV infection among patients with inherited coagulation disorders has been reported at 48.07% (35.66%-60.48%) in a recent meta-analysis (4).

We would like to call to attention the following points from the above mentioned study. Firstly, the Hemophilia Center is a referral center in Iran for transfusion-induced HCV infected patients who want to establish judicial records with the intent to complain to the Ministry of Health for following their infection costs. Thus, more HCV infected patients are seen in this clinic because it is medically and financially beneficial for them. Hence, the prevalence of HCV infection among hemophilia patients has been over estimated in this center. In addition, the majority of hemophilia patients in Iran have previously received treatment and their sustained virological response (SVR) rate is reported as 65% (2). Therefore, the reported results of this study suffer from some bias and are not generalizable. We would like to suggest that the authors combine the results of several original studies undertaken in primary treatment centers by meta-analysis for the prevention of possible bias. Finally, according to the title of this article the associated factors of HCV prevalence among subjects should be reported, however the authors have mentioned no association in the results section.

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