



Prevalence of Hepatitis C Infection among Immunocompromised Patients at St. Luke's Medical Center – Quezon City: A Five-Year Retrospective Cohort Study

Lorenz S. Lista, MD, Minette Claire O. Rosario, MD
St. Luke's Medical Center – Quezon City, Philippines

Background

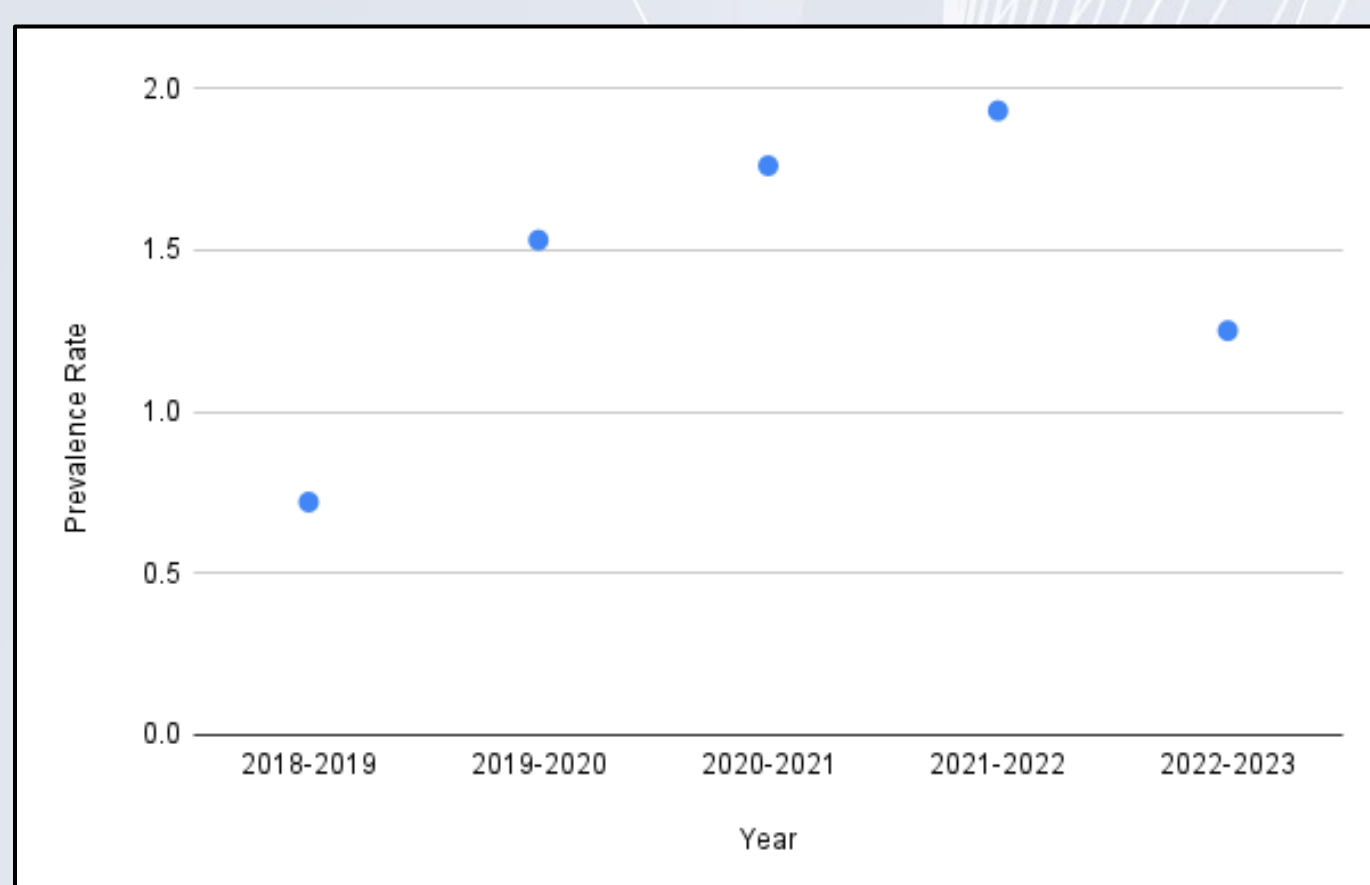
Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection remains a global health concern, with an estimated prevalence of 2.5% (177.5 million adults). Data on HCV among immunocompromised patients in the Philippines are lacking. This study examined the prevalence, characteristics, and outcomes of HCV coinfection among immunocompromised individuals at St. Luke's Medical Center, Quezon City. The objectives of this study is to determine the prevalence of HCV coinfection among patients with HIV, end-stage renal disease (ESRD), cancer, and organ transplants.

Method

We conducted a retrospective cohort study of adults admitted from September 2018 to September 2023. Inclusion criteria were HIV, ESRD on hemodialysis, malignancies, or solid organ/bone marrow transplantation with documented HCV testing. Demographic, clinical, testing, and treatment outcomes were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results

Of 2,470 patients, 35 had HCV, yielding an overall prevalence of 1.42%. Prevalence was highest among HIV (2.74%) and ESRD (1.59%) patients. While older patients were more common, prevalence was similar across age groups. Risk indicators included low CD4 counts, multiple sexual partners, and history of blood transfusion. Among HCV-positive patients, 77.1% did not undergo confirmatory HCV RNA testing, and only 17.1% received antiviral therapy.



Prevalence rate of hepatitis C infection per year, SLMC-QC, 2018-2023. The graph illustrates the prevalence rate of hepatitis C coinfection over five years from 2018 to 2023. It shows a clear upward trend from 2018-2019 to 2021-2022. Starting at 0.72% in 2018-2019, it more than doubled by 2019-2020, reaching 1.53%. This increase continued through the following years, climbing to 1.76% in 2020-2021 and peaking at 1.93% in 2021-2022. These periods of upward trend coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the trend shifted in 2022-2023, with the prevalence rate decreasing to 1.25%.

Conclusions

HCV coinfection prevalence was low overall but higher in HIV and ESRD groups, underscoring the need for enhanced surveillance and targeted interventions. The underutilization of confirmatory testing and treatment highlights significant gaps in care, emphasizing the importance of improving diagnostic and therapeutic pathways for immunocompromised patients in the Philippines.