

Prophylaxis strategy prevents perinatal HBV transmission

May 28 2014

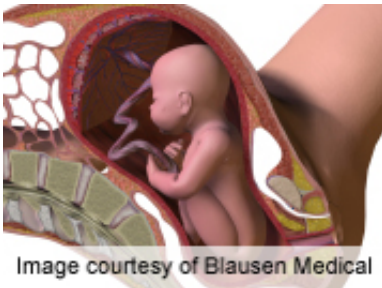


Image courtesy of Blausen Medical

(HealthDay)—Prenatal screening followed by immunoprophylaxis for infants of mothers with chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection decreases perinatal transmission, according to research published online May 27 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Ai Kubo, Ph.D., of Kaiser Permanente in Oakland, Calif., and colleagues conducted an observational study of 4,446 infants born to 3,253 HBV-positive mothers. The authors sought to assess the efficacy of an immunoprophylaxis program.

The researchers found that the infant HBV [infection rates](#) per 100 births were 3.37 (95 percent confidence interval [CI], 2.08 to 5.14) for e antigen-positive mothers and 0.04 (95 percent CI, 0.001 to 0.24) for e antigen-negative mothers. Among mothers who received testing, the

lowest viral load level associated with transmission of HBV was 6.32×10^7 IU/mL. Infection rates per 100 births were 3.61 (95 percent CI, 0.75 to 10.56) among mothers with [viral loads](#) of 5×10^7 IU/mL or greater (83 births) and 0 among [mothers](#) with viral loads less than 5×10^7 IU/mL (831 births), regardless of e antigen status.

"A negative e antigen status or a viral load less than 5×10^7 IU/mL (90.9 percent of women tested) identifies women at extremely low risk for transmission after immunoprophylaxis who are unlikely to benefit from further interventions," the authors write.

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Citation: Prophylaxis strategy prevents perinatal HBV transmission (2014, May 28) retrieved 19 April 2024 from

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