

## Viral Hepatitis

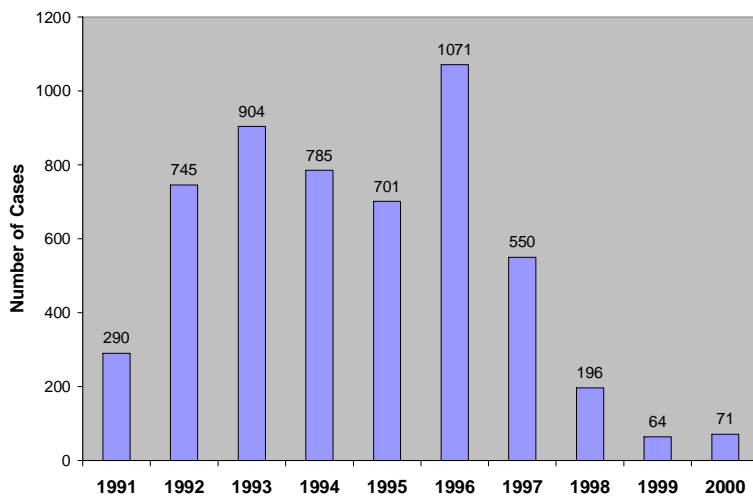
Viral hepatitis is a term describing several diseases that affect the liver and share some clinical features, but differ etiologically, epidemiologically, and in their natural histories. This Health Status Update reviews recent trends for hepatitis A and B and discusses surveillance for hepatitis C in Utah.

### Hepatitis A

- Hepatitis A is the most common type of hepatitis reported in the United States.
- From 1987-1997, Utah was among 11, mostly western, states that accounted for 50% of all reported Hepatitis A virus (HAV) infections but only 22% of the population. Since 1996, the number of cases reported in Utah has steadily declined (Figure 1). Communities with high rates of HAV typically have epidemics every 5-10 years that can last for several years.

## Hepatitis A

Figure 1. Number of reported acute hepatitis A cases, Utah, 1991-2000.



Source: Bureau of Epidemiology, UDOH

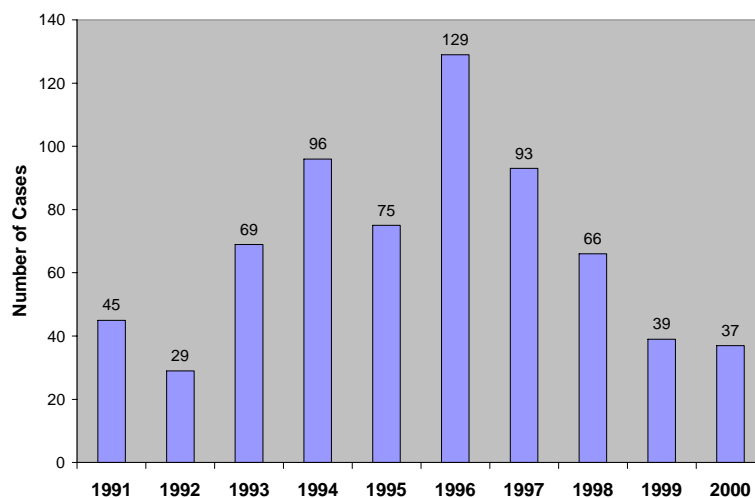
- Hepatitis A vaccine was licensed in 1995 for use in persons > 2 years of age and provides long-term protection against HAV infection. Hepatitis A vaccination programs in high rate communities that achieve and sustain high first dose vaccine coverage (65-80%) in preschool and school age children have been shown to interrupt hepatitis A outbreaks and prevent subsequent outbreaks. Hepatitis A vaccination is now required for school entry in Utah.

### Hepatitis B

- In Utah, the number of reported cases of hepatitis B (HBV) over the last ten years peaked in 1996 with 129 cases (Figure 2).
- Hepatitis B vaccines have been available in the United States since about 1981. Until recently, (HBV) infection was one of the most frequently reported vaccine-preventable diseases in the United States.

## Hepatitis B

Figure 2. Number of reported acute hepatitis B cases in Utah, 1991-2000.

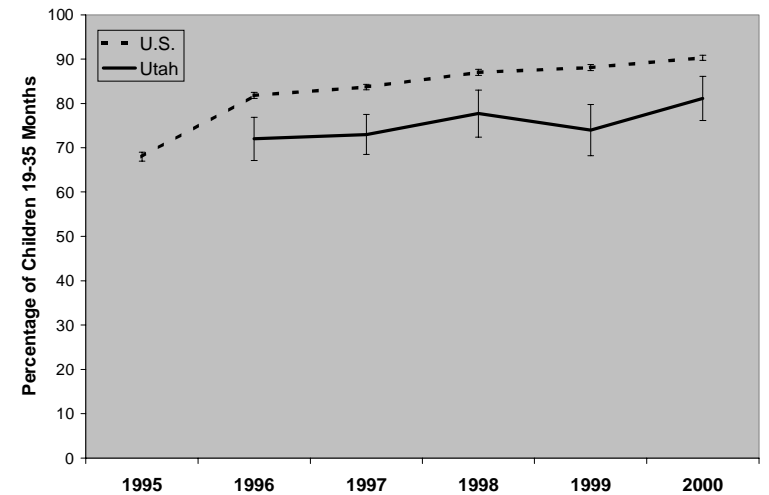


Source: Bureau of Epidemiology, UDOH

- In 1991, the ACIP recommended routine hepatitis B vaccination of infants, vaccination of certain adolescents, and vaccination of adults at high risk of infection.
- Hepatitis B vaccination is required for school entry in Utah.
- Immunization rates for Hepatitis B at age ~2 years in Utah are significantly lower than elsewhere in the U.S. (Figure 3).

## Hepatitis B Immunization Rates

Figure 3. Percentage of children 19-35 months of age who had received 3 or more doses of hepatitis B vaccine, United States and Utah, 1995-2000.



Source: National Immunization Survey, CDC

### Utah and U.S. Rates

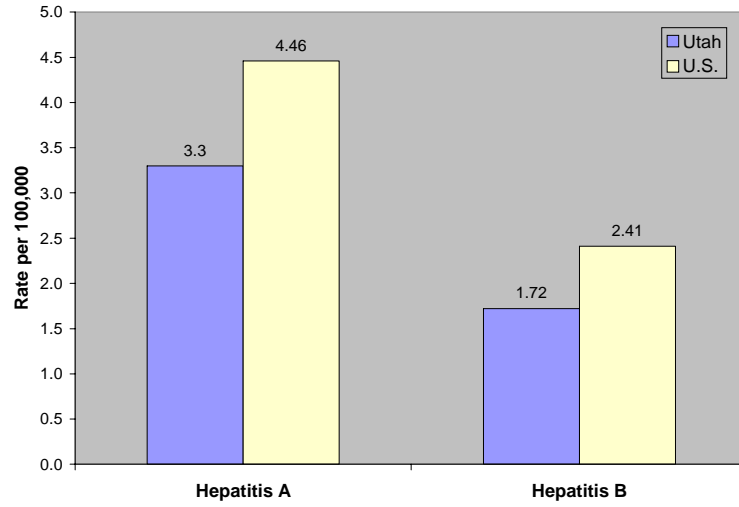
- In 2000, Utah's rates of reported acute HAV and HBV infections were lower than the U.S. rates (Figure 4).

### Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is the most common chronic blood borne infection in the United States. HCV causes an estimated 40% of chronic liver disease. The NHANES III Survey

## Utah vs. U.S.

Figure 4. Rates per 100,000 persons of reported Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B, Utah and United States, 2000.



(1988-1994) found that 1.8% of Americans (3.9 million people) were infected. Many or most were chronically infected and unaware they were infected. Most (~60%) current cases of HCV are acquired through injecting drug use.

In 2000, 1,629 laboratory confirmed cases of hepatitis C were reported in Utah. However, hepatitis C reporting has been unreliable to date because Utah is among the many states without the resources required for case investigations to determine if a laboratory report represents acute or chronic infection.

### Conclusion

Viral hepatitis cases are commonly reported in Utah despite the availability of hepatitis A and B vaccines. As hepatitis C prevention and control programs are implemented, federal, state, and local agencies will need to determine the best methods to effectively monitor new disease acquisition.

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