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NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) ADVISORY

Adenovirus Testing and Reporting of Children with Acute Hepatitis of Unknown Etiology

April 21st, 2022

New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) is issuing a Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory to notify clinicians and hospital staff who encounter pediatric patients with severe hepatitis of unknown etiology to consider adenovirus testing and report such cases to NMDOH.

Background:

On April 21st, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Advisory to notify clinicians and public health authorities of a cluster of children identified with hepatitis and adenovirus infection. In November 2021, clinicians at a large children's hospital in Alabama notified the CDC of five pediatric patients with significant liver injury, including three with acute liver failure, who also tested positive for adenovirus. All children were previously healthy, and none had a current COVID-19 infection. Case-finding efforts at this hospital identified four additional pediatric patients with hepatitis and adenovirus infection for a total of nine patients admitted from October 2021 through February 2022; all five specimens that were sequenced had adenovirus type 41 infection identified. In two patients, plasma samples were negative for adenovirus by quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR), but both patients were positive when retested using whole blood. Two patients required liver transplant; no patients died. A possible association between pediatric hepatitis and adenovirus infection is currently under investigation. Cases of pediatric hepatitis in children who tested negative for hepatitis viruses A, B, C, D, and E were reported earlier this month in the United Kingdom including some with adenovirus infection. Other countries reporting cases include Denmark, Israel, Ireland, Netherlands, and Spain and among others.

Recommendations for Clinicians:

If any pediatric patients have presented with the following criteria (below) since October 2021, clinicians should consider adenovirus testing and report possible cases to NMDOH.

- Patient <10 years of age
- Elevated aspartate aminotransferase (AST) or alanine aminotransferase (ALT) (>500 U/L)
- Have unknown etiology for their hepatitis

For these patients, NAAT (e.g. PCR) testing with whole blood specimens is preferable for identifying adenovirus. However, testing may be done on respiratory specimens, stool or rectal swabs, or blood specimens. If patients are still under medical care or have residual specimens available, please save and freeze them for possible additional testing and contact the NMDOH at 505-827-0006.

Clinicians should report possible cases to NMDOH at 505-827-0006 or by faxing in the notifiable conditions report form to 505-827-0013. Clinicians faxing in the report form should select “other” and write “hepatitis of unknown etiology” under the routine reporting section. Occupational information need not be reported.

Additional Resources:

[CDC HAN 462.pdf](#)

[Hepatitis Prevention \(nmhealth.org\)](http://nmhealth.org)

[Adenovirus | CDC](#)

New Mexico Health Alert Network: To register for the NM Health Alert Network, please visit the following site <https://nm.readyop.com/fs/4cjZ/10b2> Please fill out the registration form completely and click Submit at the bottom of the page, to begin receiving Important health alerts, advisories, and updates.

Please Note that our system also utilizes text messaging to notify members of important health information. Due to FCC Regulation changes that are designed to decrease the amount of unwanted spam text messages sent each year to citizens, please save, this phone number **(855) 596-1810** as the “**New Mexico Health Alert Network**” default phone number for your account used for text messages on the mobile device(s) you register with us.

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