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HEPATITIS C VIRUS GENOTYPING BY REAL- TIME PCR AMONG POSITIVE PATIENTS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH VIRAL LOAD IN BASRAH, SOUTH OF IRAQ

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the distribution of HCV genotypes diversity circulating in Basrah, south of Iraq.A total of 320 serum sample from hepatitis patients were used in this study. All samples were positive for both HCV antibodies and HCV RNA. Hepatitis C virus genotyping was performed by using HCV Genotype Plus (R1-Gen-6) Real-TM kit (Sacace Biotechnologies, Italy) which detrmines the following HCV genotypes: 1a,1b, 2, 3a, 4, 5a and 6.Out of 320 serum samples, 147 (46%) were determined to be subtype 1b, 123 (38.4%) were genotype 4, 32 (10%) were subtype 1a,3 (0.9%) were genotype 2, and 15 (4.7%) we untypable by the method used. The average viral load of the patients infected with genotype 1b was significantly higher than average viral load of the patients infected with genotypes 4 and 2 ($P<0.01$). In conclusion, genotypes 1 and 4 were most frequently found in this geographical region and the severity of liver disease was more in genotype 1 as assessed by higher viral load.