

## **THE CLINICAL FEATURES OF CHRONIC DUAL INFECTED WITH HEPATITIS B AND C**

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**BACKGROUND/AIMS:** Dual infection of HBV/HCV was considered to be a more severe disease than Chronic hepatitis B or C alone. High prevalence of this dual infection has been reported in southern Taiwan. To clarify the clinical features of dual infection of HBV/HCV in this area, we conducted this study to compare patients with chronic hepatitis B (CHB) and chronic hepatitis C (CHC).

**METHODS:** There were 169 chronic dual infections of HBV/HCV patients, 214 CHB patients, and 417 CHC patients in Chi-Mei Hospital, Liouying enrolled in the study. The clinical features, prevalence of cirrhosis and prevalence of hepatocellular carcinoma were analyzed.

**RESULTS:** patients with dual infection of HBV/HCV and CHC were older than patients with CHB (56.3 + 14.0 years and 60.7 + 11.9 years versus 47.6 + 15.5 years), higher prevalence of liver cirrhosis (34% and 34% versus 26%), HCC (14.2% and 11.5% versus 7%), and lower prevalence of normal ALT (39.6% and 38% versus 60%). The sex ratio of dual infection had male predominance (M:F=1.5:1) which was similar to CHB (M:F=1.8:1). The rate of HbeAg (+) was lower in patients with dual infection than CHB (6.5% versus 22%).

**DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS:** The age of patients with dual infection was similar to those with CHC, and the sex ratio was similar to those with CHB. The lower prevalence of HbeAg (+) and lower rate of normal ALT levels in dual infection indicate that patients with dual HBV/HCV infection may get HBV infection at a younger age and HCV infection at an older age. The clinical features were more severe in patients with dual infectionand CHC than in patients with CHB.

**Key words:** Dual infection of HBV/HCV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C.