**A COMPARISON OF MANAGEMENT FOR HEPATITIS B PATIENTS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINESE HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS**

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**BACKGROUND:** China is considered an endemic Hepatitis B (HBV) region, with about 100-150 million chronically infected, compared to 550,000-2 million in the US. With such high volumes of HBV cases, it is important to learn how the Chinese healthcare system is addressing this public health issue. The purpose of this study is to compare how the US and Chinese healthcare systems manage HBV.

**METHODS:** This qualitative study was done through primary research. Key informant interviews were conducted with US hepatologists (N=10), and Chinese hepatologists (N=5), infectious disease physicians (N=5), and liver surgeons (N=2) at West China Hospital in Chengdu, China. Qualitative interviews were stopped after results from successive interviews yielded similar findings.

**RESULTS:** Antiviral therapies, entecavir and tenofovir, continue to be first-line in both countries. Clinical surveillance of HBV is also similar in both countries, where HBV patients are followed-up every 3-6 months, with routine bloodwork (i.e. CBC, LFTs, DNA viral load) and abdominal ultrasound required. However, the most stark contrast between the two countries is the physician-patient relationship. Due to differences in patient volume, general population size, and cultural differences, the Chinese healthcare system is much more focused on quantity of patients served rather than quality of services provided.

**CONCLUSIONS:** It’s typical for Chinese hepatologists to see 60-80 HBV cases/day (~5-7 minutes/patient), whereas US hepatologists see 5-10 cases/day. This allows US hepatologists to take much more time on patient education, whereas the Chinese hepatologists simply do not have the bandwidth. Whether this difference in doctor-patient relationship translates to better outcomes is an open question that warrants continuation of this research. To extrapolate these findings to a larger scale, this study should be replicated at other sites, both in China and the US.

**CONTENT CATEGORY:** Patient Care

**KEYWORDS:** *Hepatitis, HBV, Hepatology, China, HCC*