Preface

Hepatitis B Virus: The Past, The Present, and The Future

Tarek I. Hassanein, MD, FACP, FACG, AGAF, FAASLD
Editor

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) is a unique DNA virus with worldwide distribution infecting millions of individuals and causing progressive liver disease and cancer in many patients. Despite the availability of effective vaccines, challenges still persist in different parts of the world in implementing global vaccination efforts. Drs Nelson, Easterbrook, and McMahon discuss the epidemiology of HBV and the current situation of HBV vaccination. As our understanding of the virus replication and interaction with the human immune system improves, we can tailor viral inhibition and ameliorate viral effects on the liver and the patient as a whole. Drs Bengsch and Chang take us on a journey exploring the HBV virology and its interactions with the human immune system. With the recent advances in oral antivirals, new data continue to show the beneficial effect of immune modulators such as interferons in subgroups of patients with active HBV infection. Drs Konerman and Lok briefly review the current indications for the use of interferons in an era of highly active hepatitis B antivirals. The goal of curing HBV is still unreachable, but the current therapies effectively impact the viral replications and improve hepatic inflammation and liver fibrosis. Dr Rockey covers the dynamic processes of fibrogenesis and the effects of antivirals on liver injury and fibrosis. Delay in the diagnosis and the use of antivirals may result in patient disease progression causing liver decompensation. Drs Luvisa and Hassanein cover the approach of managing patients with liver decompensation and those who need liver transplantation. Patients with chronic HBV infection continue to have a risk for hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) and non-HCC cancers. Drs Kwok and Tran address the issue of non-HCC cancer in patients chronically infected with HBV. The role of surgery in patients with HCC is detailed by Drs Hemming, Berumen, and Mekeel. A subset of patients who continue to suffer the ravages of HBV infection ultimately benefit from liver transplantation. Managing patients who receive a liver transplant is costly and sometimes difficult. Drs S. Saab, Chen, C. Saab, and Tong discuss the different approaches for managing HBV after liver transplantation. Although the current Hepatitis B antiviral therapies are readily
available and highly effective in suppressing viral replication and disease progression in the great majority of patients, achieving cure is still far away. Drs Boucle, Bassit, Ehteshami, and Schinazi end the issue with a glimpse of the new approaches to achieve the ultimate goal of cure. This issue of the *Clinics of Liver Disease* gathered a distinguished faculty discussing the most recent data surrounding the past, present, and future of HBV. Many thanks to the faculty for their participation, and the editorial team for their exhaustive efforts in putting this issue together.

Tarek I. Hassanein, MD, FACP, FACG, AGAF, FAASLD
University of California
San Diego School of Medicine
San Diego, CA, USA

Southern California Liver Centers
San Diego, CA, USA

Southern California Research Center
PO Box 181770
Coronado, CA 92178-1770, USA

E-mail address: thassanein@livercenters.com