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Transfusion

HEPATITIS B ANTIGEN The effectiveness of various screening techniques for hepatitis B antigen (HBAg) was investigated in a prospective study of 82 patients. All blood given was negative for HBAG by the commonly used counterelectrophoresis test. Sixty-three patients received blood positive for HBAG when tested by erythrocyte agglutination (RCA) and/or solid-state radioimmunoassay (RIA). Nineteen control patients received individually equal amounts of HBAG-negative blood tested by RCA and RIA. Of the 63 patients, four became positive, and 13 produced evidence of antibody formation to

HBAG. Another 14 had clinical signs of hepatitis without detectable HBAG activity. In the 19-patient control group two persons developed HBAG activity and eight others contracted HBAG-negative clinical hepatitis. The authors conclude that both RCA and RIA methods of HBAG detection are superior to the common counterelectrophoresis technique and that RCA correlated more closely than RIA with the incidence of posttransfusion HBAG hepatitis. (Koretz R.L., and others: *Post-transfusion Hepatitis in Recipients of Blood Screened by Newer Assays. Lancet Sept:694-696, 1973.*)