# Hepatitis A: The Discovery That Led To Change

The Hepatitis A virus (HAV) is a microorganism that causes the disease Hepatitis A. This disease is an infection of the liver that can be very dangerous as well as contagious. When the Hepatitis A virus takes effect within the body it disrupts and impairs the typical functions of the human liver (Hepatitis A, 2019). This disease rarely results in death, but that should not downplay the magnitude of the effects that can be detrimental to your bodily functions.

## History

The Hepatitis A virus was discovered in 1973 at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease. It was discovered by Stephen Feinstone along with two others, Albert Kapikian and Robert Purcell. It is not exactly clear as to how the virus was found or the experiments that were responsible for the finding of HAV (Stephen Feinstone, 2019). The virus's scientific name is Hepatovirus hepatovirus A and is a member of the Picornaviridae family. The hepatitis A virus has a genome which is made up of a single strand of RNA (Hepatitis A Virus). It also has a spherical shape or in technical terms an icosahedral capsid (Center, Bode Science, 2015).

## Mechanism

Hepatovirus hepatovirus A leads to many symptoms such as: fatigue, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, low-grade fever, and even dark urine, weight loss, and yellow skin and eyes (Hepatitis A, 2019). The virus causing disease is spread through contaminated food or water, most times a fecal-oral route, which means that particles from feces has been passed from one person to the mouth of another. This virus can take anywhere from two to six weeks to actually begin affecting the liver and causing damage (Fecal–Oral Route, 2020). It can severely impact the functionality of a person's liver. It creates an infection in the liver, which results in swelling. Many times though the person suffering from Hepatitis A does not recover with permanent liver damage even though sometimes it can cause liver failure, resulting in pain and death (Hepatitis A, 2019).

## Reconciliation

There is currently no cure for the disease Hepatitis A or the virus that causes it, although it normally can subside with time. This is only after certain health requirements are met, such as: getting plenty of rest, eating light meals, taking painkillers, and avoiding alcoholic substances. There is a vaccine that can be taken to prevent this disease (VAQTA or HAVRIX), and the first vaccination should take place anywhere between their first and second birthdays (Omudhome, 2019). Side effects include soreness at the site of injection, tiredness, headaches and loss of appetite, but extreme side effects would consist of allergic reactions, seizures, and etc (Vaccine Information Statement, 2019).

## Future Research

There are many virologists, scientists that study viruses, out in the world today that are working

hard in order to help the continuation of preventing, treating, and eliminating viral hepatitis, such as Hepatovirus hepatovirus A. There is an establishment called the World Health Organization and there the administration decided to create a program that's sole purpose is to stop and treat hepatitis. They are constantly doing research to hopefully be able to put an end to the burden that viral hepatitis puts on people's lives (A Brighter Future in the Fight against Hepatitis, 2013). As for the studies that are mainly focused on Hepatitis A there isn't much to show, since a vaccine has been discovered virologists are putting most of their resources into studying the other forms of hepatitis because they affect more humans and have a way higher mortality rate.

## Conclusion

The virus Hepatovirus hepatovirus A is a very complex microorganism that can lead to a painful disease. This virus that causes Hepatitis A will bring discomfort, pain, and even though rare, sometimes death. This virus attacks the liver and leaves it swollen and unable to function right. It is caused by not washing your hands after using the restroom and the particles from feces then gets onto one's food. It is very dangerous but preventable by a vaccine. Hepatitis A is not fun, like many diseases, so do what is needed to not contract HAV.

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