Hepatitis B Prevalence High Among Syrian Refugees in Europe

April 22, 2016

As Germany continues to deal with an unprecedented influx of refugees and asylum seekers from war-torn countries like Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as from countries that make up the Horn of Africa, public health officials have begun looking for high rates of hepatitis B virus (HBV) in the incoming population, HCP Live reports.

German researchers recently took the stand at the International Liver Congress in Barcelona, saying that more than one million Syrian refugees have entered Germany over the last year. Through voluntary testing at refugee centers, doctors there have discovered that 2.3 percent of Syrian migrants coming into Germany have tested positive for hep B—a rate nearly three times higher than the rest of the country.

Germany has since begun testing all its refugees for HBV and has also initiated treatment for every person who subsequently tests positive for the virus. Those results have not yet been published, but researchers believe that hep B rates among refugees are not much higher than in Syria as a whole so far.

German health officials are also offering HBV vaccinations to every Syrian refugee who tests negative for the virus, as findings show that nearly 63 percent of the Syrian population has not been vaccinated against hep B.

The report comes amid continuing backlash against German Chancellor Angela Merkel's "We Can Do It" initiative, an open-door policy for Middle Eastern refugees affected by ongoing conflicts in the region.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/article/hepatitis-b-prevalence-high-among-syrian-refugees-europe