Hepatitis E Lurks in Much of the European Blood Supply

August 19, 2014

A new study out of the United Kingdom has revealed that one in almost 3,000 blood donors in the country are currently carrying the hepatitis E virus (HEV), which can cause long-term liver disease if left untreated, Yahoo.com reports.

The surprising stats, which were published on World Hepatitis Day (July 28) in The Lancet, have since sparked a call among some experts for universal screening for hep E throughout European blood supplies.

According to a systematic analysis of 225,000 English blood donations, researchers say 79 tested positive for genotype 3 of the hepatitis E virus, which is the most common strain in the developed world. Among those 79 people, one ended up developing mild clinical hepatitis.

Humans can contract hepatitis E from infected pigs, blood or drinking water. Symptoms include appetite loss and fever, but the virus can be dangerous for those with suppressed immune systems, such as pregnant women and people with cancer or HIV. There is no cure for hepatitis E.

Researchers have estimated that between 80,000 and 100,000 hep E infections occurred in England in just one year. Similar prevalences have been reported in Sweden and Germany.

To read the full Yahoo.com report, click here.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/article/hepatitis-e-lurks-in-europe-26048-1447117166