EPIDEMIOLOGY OF CHRONIC VIRAL HEPATITIS B/D AND C IN THE VULNERABLE POPULATION IN THE NORTH-EAST AND SOUTH-EAST REGIONS OF ROMANIA – INTERMEDIATE STAGE RESULTS IN THE LIVE(RO)2 - EAST SCREENING

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A prospective screening study in North-East and South-East Romania (July 2021–April 2023) found 3.8% prevalence of chronic hepatitis B/D and C viral infections among 55,593 vulnerable individuals tested, with higher rates in Roma populations and among inactive, uninsured, and disabled groups.

KEY POINTS

- Of 2,160 positive cases, 49.8% were HBsAg positive, 42.5% had HCV antibodies, 1.7% had HBV/HCV coinfection, and 5.9% had HBV/VHD coinfection, with a mean patient age of 55.86 years and 76.19% from rural backgrounds.
- Among HCV antibody-positive patients, 54.3% had detectable HCV RNA and 72.3% of those received antiviral treatment; among HBsAg-positive individuals, HBV-DNA was performed in 67.3%.
- Viral infection prevalence was 4.29% in Roma people versus 3.23% in Romanian people, with vulnerable groups including inactive people (27.7%), uninsured people (11.2%), people with disabilities (3.99%), and people addicted to alcohol (2.43%).
- The authors conclude that the high prevalence in vulnerable populations indicates significant viral spread and highlights the need for further testing and public health policies to promote access to health services and early antiviral treatment.
- This study is part of the LIVE(RO) 2 project aimed at meeting WHO requirements for viral hepatitis eradication by 2030 and would be relevant to public health professionals and clinicians working with vulnerable populations in Romania.

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