

Acute Hepatitis of Unknown Etiology Among Young Children

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Standards and Guidelines

Hepatobiliary

Paediatrics

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The European Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition reviews the 2022 outbreak of acute hepatitis of unknown etiology in previously healthy children, primarily under 6 years of age, that began in the United Kingdom and spread globally.

KEY POINTS

- More than 270 cases were reported from the United Kingdom and hundreds more worldwide following the initial April 2022 reports, with approximately 5% requiring liver transplantation.
- Clinical presentation was nonspecific, typically beginning with diarrhea and vomiting followed by jaundice, abdominal pain, nausea, and malaise.
- Between 50 and 60% of tested children were diagnosed with adenovirus infection, though a clear etiological connection has not been demonstrated.
- No link with SARS-CoV-2 infection or COVID-19 vaccine was found.
- It remains unclear whether the reported cases represent a true increase in incidence or heightened awareness following initial United Kingdom reports.

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