Abstract

Objective. To determine the prevalence of Hepatitis A within subpopulations of southern California counties. Material and Methods. Age and race/ethnic-specific hepatitis A rates were derived from the California Department of Health Services Surveillance and Statistics Section for 1996-2001 and from demographic data of the California Department of Finance. Results. 2.3 million Latino children (aged 0-14 years) in five southern California counties had a rate of 31.1 cases per 100 000, five times higher than the non-Hispanic white rate. Conclusion. The CDC Advisory Comité on Immunization Practices recommends routine vaccination for children with “very high” rates of hepatitis A. The annual prevalence of hepatitis A in California, especially in southern California, met the CDC’s “very high” definition, therefore Latino children in these counties should be considered for routine childhood hepatitis A vaccination. As health has no borders, this issue should be addressed by the public health services of both, the United States and Mexico’s public health services.

Keywords
Hepatitis A, vaccination, Latino, United States.