

Peer Review

# Review of: "Sero-prevalence of Viral Hepatitis B and C infection and associated factors among Pregnant Women in Southeast Ethiopia: Community-based cross-sectional study"

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## Abstract

- The abstract effectively summarizes the study but lacks a concluding statement emphasizing the implications of the findings.
- Revise:
- "Those variables with p-value <0.05 were declared as a factor associated with the dependent variable." → Replace with **"Variables with a p-value <0.05 were considered statistically significant predictors of hepatitis B and C infection."**
- Clarify the significance of your findings in a broader context, particularly in relation to public health interventions.

## Introduction

- The introduction is informative but needs to be more concise and better structured.
- Revise:
- "Despite the availability of vaccines and antiviral treatment, hepatitis B and hepatitis C viral infections remain public health problems..." → Consider specifying why vaccination programs have not eradicated HBV (e.g., low coverage, vaccine escape mutations).
- Add **recent references (2020-2023)** to support the prevalence statistics provided.

- Instead of listing prevalence statistics separately, integrate them into a single paragraph for better flow.
- Provide a clearer research gap: **Why is it important to conduct this study in Robe town, Ethiopia?**

## Methods

- **Study Population & Sampling:** Clearly mention inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- **Serological Testing:** Clarify if confirmatory tests (e.g., PCR for HCV RNA) were used.
- **Ethical Approval:** Expand on how participants' confidentiality was maintained.

## Results

- The **tables and figures are well presented**, but there are redundant text descriptions that could be condensed.
- "Having a history of dental extraction (AOR =2.70, 95% CI 1.09, 6.69)..." → It would be better to **group associated factors into thematic categories (e.g., medical procedures, behavioral risk factors)** for better readability.
  - "The reason for variations of seroprevalence HBsAg in Ethiopia and elsewhere might be due to differences in geographical areas, level of awareness..." → Try to provide more **concrete evidence or citations** for these claims.
  - Discuss the **public health implications** of your findings in terms of **prevention strategies, vaccination policies, and antenatal screening programs.**
  - Address **possible study limitations**, such as recall bias in self-reported risk factors.

## Discussion

- Needs to be **expanded and critically analyzed** by comparing findings with other recent studies.
- Revise:

## Conclusion

- Needs to be **more impactful** by clearly summarizing:
  - Key findings.
  - Implications for future research.
  - Recommended interventions.

## References

- **Several references are outdated (before 2015)**—consider adding more recent studies (2020–2023).
- Ensure **uniform formatting** in the reference list (i.e., use a consistent citation style).

#### **Overall Assessment**

- **Scientific Contribution:** The study provides valuable insights into HBV and HCV prevalence among pregnant women in Ethiopia.

#### **Declarations**

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.