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**PREVALENCE OF HEPATITIS C VIRUS (HCV) INFECTION AND GENOTYPES IN HEMODIALYSIS PATIENTS IN SALVADOR-BA, A NORTHEASTERN AREA OF BRAZIL.**

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A cross-sectional study was performed to determine the prevalence of HCV infection and genotypes among hemodialysis (HD) patients in Salvador, a northeastern area of Brazil. Anti-HCV seroprevalence was investigated in 1021 HD patients from eight different dialysis centers. Among those seropositive HD patients aged 26 years old or higher, 97.5% (115/118) collected blood samples to perform the qualitative HCV detection and genotyping. Anti-HCV seroprevalence among HD patients was 11.6% (118/1021) (95% CI: 9.7-13.6). Viremia was detected in 62.1% (64/103) determining an estimate of HCV persistent infection equal to 7.1% (95% CI 5.7-8.9). HCV genotype 1 (78.2%) was the most prevalent followed by genotype 3 (14.5%) and genotype 2 (1.8%). Mix infection between genotype 1 and 3 was present in 5.5% of the total of patients. Our results indicate a significant decrease in the anti-HCV prevalence from 23.8% (previous study) to 11.6% in the city of Salvador. HCV genotypes distribution is very similar when compared with other hemodialysis populations in Brazil, local blood donors and other groups under transfusion-transmitted risk of infection. **Financial support:** This work was partially supported by research grants from CNPq, FIOCRUZ, FAPESB, and CAPES/FIOCRUZ (doctored scholarship, between March 1999 to March 2003).