

**Minutes of the Viral Hepatitis in the Arctic Work Group Held at the ICCH13 in
Novosibirsk, Russia on June 13, 2006**

It was decided to form a formal Work Group for Viral Hepatitis in the Arctic during a meeting of interested individuals from Russia, Alaska, Canada and Greenland/Scandinavia held during ICCH 13. The 21 individuals who signed up to be a part of this working group are listed below:

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Japan	Masashi Mizokami	mizokami@med.nagoya-cu.ac.jp

- 1) The group decided upon the Mission and Goals of the Work Group Possible Mission and Goals of the Viral Hepatitis Working Group to be:
 - a. Mission: To promote Research on Viral Hepatitis and Liver Disease in the Arctic:
 - b. Goals:
 - i. To identify areas of Research where collaboration between Arctic Countries can address important issues regarding Viral Hepatitis.
 - ii. To establish collaborative Research projects on Viral Hepatitis and Liver Disease between Countries in the Arctic.
 - iii. To Conduct regular working group and scientific meetings for the purpose of exchanging research findings and developing collaborative projects
 - c. Future Goals:
 - i. The group also talked about the possibility of making recommendations based on both evidence obtained from research and established practice guidelines for management of viral hepatitis in specific Arctic regions.
 - ii. The group also discussed the possibility of including other liver diseases affecting populations in the Arctic in future years including Alcohol related liver disease, autoimmune liver diseases, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) and others.
- 2) Areas of collaborative Research: Several potential areas for collaborative research were discussed primarily in the areas of hepatitis B and hepatitis C. It was decided to initially focus the groups' efforts on Chronic Hepatitis B in the Arctic.
 - a. Chronic Hepatitis B in the Arctic: Three areas of potential collaboration were identified.
 - i. Characterizing the distribution of HBV genotypes in the Arctic
 - ii. Documenting the mutation rate and specific substitutions in the HBV genome over time in the Arctic. This research could be conducted simultaneously in Alaska, Canada and Greenland where extensive serum banks of HBV infected persons exist.
 - iii. Determining the occurrence of active liver disease in HBsAg carriers living in the Arctic, including the prevalence rate of liver inflammation and fibrosis and risk factors associated with hepatic disease progression including HBV genotype, age, sex, environmental toxins, alcohol, the metabolic syndrome and co-infection with other viruses especially hepatitis D (HDV) as well as hepatitis C and HIV.
- 3) Resources available to use in the collaborative studies of Viral Hepatitis in the Arctic:
 - a. Laboratory:
 - i. Each Arctic country has established laboratories that can perform serologic testing for viral hepatitis markers. Molecular biology laboratories capable of HBV genotype and viral load testing, as well as HBV genome sequencing are available in Russia, Canada and Alaska. In addition, Professor Masashi Mizokami has

indicated his willingness to provide support to compare the DNA sequences of HBV genotypes found in the Arctic with HBV genotypes from other regions of the world.

- ii. Each Arctic country has researchers experienced in epidemiology and clinical studies
 - iii. Biostatisticians are also available in all of the Arctic countries.
- 4) Potential future studies for the Viral Hepatitis Working Group suggested by the Working Group:
- a. Hepatitis B:
 - i. Occult hepatitis B
 - ii. Impact of hepatitis B vaccination programs
 - b. Hepatitis C
 - c. Other
- 5) Administrative Tasks and Future Meetings
- a. Chairmanship: The Chair will change yearly, rotating among the four Arctic Countries/Regions. Brian McMahon was asked to take the first year ending June 30, 2007.
 - b. Funding: Funding may be raised in a variety of ways
 - c. Next meeting. Possibly Banff at ICS meeting in April 2007