Therapy of Hepatitis B Virus Infections – Potential and Limitations

Editors
W.H. Gerlich
D. Glebe
L.G. Gürtler
R. Kaiser

Although the beginnings of hepatitis B therapy date back to 1976, it has only been in the last 10 years that it has gradually reached a satisfactory level of efficacy and dependency. According to the latest studies, many cases of chronic hepatitis B may need life-long therapy while others may reach, after several years, a kind of cure mediated by the host immune system. The main purpose of hepatitis B virus therapy is the prevention of the life-threatening late complications like liver cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma, but it is also increasingly gaining a place in severe acute hepatitis and in the prevention of reactivation or transmission of the infection in various settings. This special issue of Intervirology contains contributions from internationally renowned virologists and hepatologists who describe these additional applications. Furthermore, the remaining problems and the latest approaches to overcome them are discussed. Primarily addressing clinical virologists and hepatologists, this publication is also relevant for those who are interested in therapy and prevention of infectious diseases, including public health specialists.
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