



## Molecular epidemiology of hepatitis E virus in humans, pigs and wild boars in Sweden.

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Abstract:

**SUMMARY**Hepatitis E infections in humans are usually acquired in endemic countries in Asia or Africa. In Sweden 17 cases infected in Europe, between 1993 and 2009, were identified. All had clinical hepatitis E with unknown source of infection. Hepatitis E virus (HEV) was identified in faecal samples from 63 piglets in 12 pig farms in Sweden. HEV was also identified in blood from 13 out of 159 investigated Swedish wild boars from nine counties. Partial HEV genomes from humans, pigs and wild boars were sequenced and compared by phylogeny. The results showed close relatedness between HEV strains from piglets from the same farm and from wild boars from the same county. HEV strains from humans showed relatedness with strains from pigs and wild boars from the same county. This study showed that HEV strains form geographical clusters in the phylogenetic tree. The methods used in this study may thus be used for tracing the origin of an infecting strain. Furthermore, this study indicated that there are endemic sources of human HEV infections in Sweden.

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