

Pre S2: a marker for chronicity and/or liver damage in hepatitis B infection? Pre S2 marcador de cronicidad y/o de daño hepático de la infección con el virus de la hepatitis B?

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Pre S2 was investigated using a monoclonal ELISA in 100 samples from 52 patients with different forms of infection with Hepatitis B virus. Pre S2 was present in 18 of 19 patients with acute hepatitis. Its persistence for more than 150 days after beginning of symptoms was associated to a chronic hepatitis state. It was also present in 11 patients with chronic hepatitis or cirrhosis, 15 asymptomatic Hepatitis B carriers and 3 of 4 patients with hepatic carcinoma. Pre S2 became negative in only 1 of 3 patients treated with interferon who had a positive response according to HBe and HBs antigens. Thus, Pre S2 is present in patients with evidence of viral replication. It is more a marker of persistent Hepatitis B infection than of chronic liver damage.