

CONCLUSION

In this seroconversion study, 969 sera from individuals ranging in age from newborn to 20 years old were screened for specific IgG against EBV-VCA and HHV-6. The results demonstrated that both EBV and HHV-6 are ubiquitous in Malaysia and primary infections occur in early life. Most of the Malaysian children are EBV and HHV-6 seroconverted by the age of 3 years. Compared to EBV, HHV-6 has an earlier seroconversion. Children are infected by HHV-6 mostly in the first 2 years of life. There is no cross-reactivity between EBV and HHV-6. Both the herpes virus infections are not dependent on sex, race or the regions of the country from which the sera samples were obtained.

Although HHV-6 primary infections happen earlier in life, 100% seroconversion is not achieved. In contrast, all the children of 9 years old and above have seroconverted with respect to EBV. Thus in the Malaysian adult population there is a small fraction who would be susceptible to HHV-6 but not to EBV infection. EBV-related infectious mononucleosis would thus not be of concern in Malaysia.

The IgG-VCA ELISA kit used failed to demonstrate a reliable EBV seroconversion pattern. Immunofluorescence assay (IFA) remains the method of choice for EBV serology since it is sensitive, specific and repeatable.