9. FUTUROLOGY

The magnitude of HEV problem in developing and underdeveloped countries is increasing and because of the increased travel between the developing nations and the rest of the world, chances of HEV getting imported to the western world are high. Unlike HAV, HEV seems to be more frequently involved in fulminant hepatic failure in adults more especially in pregnant women. Extensive studies are to be further conducted not only to understand the natural history of HEV infection but also to elucidate the etiopathogenic mechanism of HEV disease and methods of its prevention and control. Thus future plans of work on HEV may include the following broad areas of HEV research.

1. Exposure pattern of HEV indicating a lower herd immunity to be further analysed for virus and host factors.
2. Are there any HEV reservoirs in the community?
3. Mechanism of HEV infection in pregnancy.
4. Analysis of strain variation Vs occurrence of outbreaks and severity of infection. Is there a need for local diagnostic kit for HEV?
5. Possibility of a HEV vaccine.