

Cirrhosis in a Woodchuck (*Marmota monax*) Due to Vertical Transmission of Woodchuck Hepatitis Virus (WHV)

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Abstract: Chronic viral infection has been reported to cause a range of hepatic lesion, including hepatic fibrosis, cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) in a wide variety of animal species. Woodchucks (*Marmota monax*) chronically infected with woodchuck hepatitis virus (WHV) develop similar progressive hepatic inflammatory and neoplastic lesions that are remarkably similar to those associated with HBV infection in humans. Twenty two-month-old offspring from woodchucks (*Marmota monax*) experimentally infected with woodchuck hepatitis virus, were purchased. One randomly chosen animal was autopsied. The liver exhibits marked cirrhotic changes characteristic of the pre-transformation phase of WHV. We believe that this may represent a new suitable and cost-effective model for the disease processes associated with hepadnaviruses in a number of other species, most notably Hepatitis B virus infection in man.