



IQWiG Reports – Commission No. S16-03

## **Screening for hepatitis B<sup>1</sup>**

### **Extract**

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<sup>1</sup> Translation of the key statement of the final report S16-03 *Screening auf Hepatitis B* (Version 1.0; Status: 19 September 2018). Please note: This document was translated by an external translator and is provided as a service by IQWiG to English-language readers. However, solely the German original text is absolutely authoritative and legally binding.

# Publishing details

**Publisher:**

Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care

**Topic:**

Screening for hepatitis B

**Commissioning agency:**

Federal Joint Committee

**Commission awarded on:**

22 September 2016

**Internal Commission No.:**

S16-03

**Address of publisher:**

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IQWiG thanks the external experts for their collaboration in the project.

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**Keywords:** Mass Screening, Hepatitis B, Benefit Assessment, Systematic Review

## **Key statement**

### ***Research question***

The aim of this report is to assess the benefit of hepatitis B virus (HBV) screening compared to no screening with regard to patient-relevant outcomes in asymptomatic patients. At-risk groups, which already undergo regular testing for HBV infection according to current medical standards in Germany (such as healthcare workers), are not the primary focus of this report.

### ***Conclusion***

No comparative interventional studies of the screening chain or therapy studies on earlier treatment initiation were found. Since it was not possible to show a benefit of the earlier initiation of HBV treatment, the diagnostic quality of HBV screening was not assessed.

An examination of the arguments and evidence found in international guidelines on the benefit and harm of HBV screening shows that these screening recommendations for at-risk groups were made without sufficient evidence and were not based on reasonable assumptions. In the absence of robust evidence, the benefit-to-harm ratio for HBV screening remains unclear overall.

Given the availability of a vaccine against HBV, the topic of HBV screening will become less relevant over time since the percentage of the population which might benefit from screening will continue to decrease.

*The full report (German version) is published under*  
<https://www.iqwig.de/de/projekte-ergebnisse/projekte/nichtmedikamentoesse-verfahren/s-projekte/s16-03-screening-auf-hepatitis-b.7583.html>