

1. INTRODUCTION

Hantavirus is a genus of the family *Bunyaviridae* and takes its name from the Hantaan River in South Korea, near where the prototype member, Hantaan virus, was first isolated. Closely related viruses include Seoul virus, Dobrava virus, and Puumala virus, which are distributed throughout the Eurasian landmass and are responsible for the spectrum of illness collectively referred to as hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS). Outbreaks of what is believed to have been HFRS have been reported in Europe and Asia since at least the 1930s. Despite growing evidence in subsequent years pointing to a viral etiology, Hantaan virus was not isolated until 1978, when a rodent reservoir for HFRS-causing viruses was confirmed (7). With an annual incidence of 150,000 to 200,000 cases, HFRS occurs almost exclusively in regions outside the Americas and therefore will not be discussed extensively here.

Despite consistent serologic evidence supporting the presence of hantavirus-infected rodents in the Western

Hemisphere, human illness due to hantavirus infection in the Americas was not recognized before the 1990s (2, 3). In 1993 an outbreak of severe respiratory illness in the southwestern United States of America led to the identification of a novel hantavirus (15) as the etiologic agent of a disease now known as hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) (62). The virus was called Sin Nombre virus (SNV) and the deer mouse, *Peromyscus maniculatus*, was found to be the primary rodent reservoir. Subsequent work has uncovered many additional hantaviruses in the Americas, several of which have been shown to cause HPS.

These guidelines review the epizootology and epidemiology of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome in the Americas; discuss clinical aspects, diagnosis, and treatment of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome; and provide recommendations for the prevention and control of hantavirus disease in the Americas.