

Hepatitis in the News, 2019-2026: Attention Peaks, Geography and Tone of Global Hepatitis Coverage, and How It Compares with Research and Invention

Fliar BI · Prism Research Layer · Working paper, October 2026 · Dataset and code: github.com/fliarbi/prism-news-api · Licence CC BY-NC 4.0

Abstract

We measure how hepatitis was covered in a global news index from January 2019 to July 2026, using 20,131 de-duplicated hepatitis articles, and set that coverage beside 76,394 research papers and 6,018 patent families on hepatitis. Six results stand out:

1. **Attention peaks.** Hepatitis took its largest share of news in May 2022, during the alerts about acute hepatitis of unknown origin in children, at 6.69 articles per 10,000, 3.3 times its 2019 annual share. The next highest month after mid-2022 was December 2025 (3.66), the month of a US vaccine advisory meeting on the hepatitis B birth dose.
2. **Seasonality.** On average 12.48% of each year's hepatitis coverage appears in July, the month of World Hepatitis Day, against 8.33% for an even spread.
3. **Geography.** The United States holds 53.11% of located hepatitis news, close to its weight in the index (lift 1.1). Africa is the most over-represented continent (1.74) and Europe the least (0.82). Among US states with 50 or more located articles, Massachusetts (3.24) and California (2.63) lead; within India, Uttar Pradesh (1.96). Between 2023 and 2025 hepatitis attention in US news rose 2.7-fold.
4. **Tone and urgency.** 81.5% of hepatitis articles are rated critical priority (all news: 42.6%), but only 36.1% are negative in tone (all news: 33.6%). Vaccination policy is the most specific theme.
5. **Measurement.** Exclusion patterns for journal abstracts, market-research notices and templated updates removed 59.47% of raw matches for the word hepatitis.
6. **Research and invention.** Between 2015 and 2025, hepatitis papers fell from 12.35 to 8.28 per 10,000 papers. Hepatitis patent families published per year fell from 837 to 412 between 2015 and 2024, and China's office held 44.9% of office filings.

Findings stated for citation

- **F1.** May 2022 was the peak month for hepatitis news, at 6.69 articles per 10,000, 3.3 times the 2019 annual share.
- **F2.** Hepatitis took 2.08 articles per 10,000 in 2022, 1.93 times its 2021 share, the highest year of 2019-2025.
- **F3.** December 2025 reached 3.66 articles per 10,000, the highest month after mid-2022.
- **F4.** Between 2019 and 2025, an average of 12.48% of each year's hepatitis news appeared in July, against 8.33% for an even spread.
- **F5.** 81.5% of hepatitis articles were rated critical priority, 1.91 times the all-news share.

- **F6.** 36.1% of hepatitis articles were negative in tone, 1.07 times the all-news share.
- **F7.** Vaccination and immunisation policy guidelines appeared in 4.95% of themed hepatitis articles, 471.32 times their frequency in all news.
- **F8.** Foodborne outbreaks (3.98%) and waterborne infectious agents (3.7%) were specific themes of hepatitis news.
- **F9.** Exclusion patterns for abstracts, market notices and templated updates removed 59.47% of raw matches.
- **F10.** Hepatitis papers fell 33% as a share of all papers between 2015 and 2025.
- **F11.** Hepatitis patent families published per year fell from 837 to 412 between 2015 and 2024; China's office held 44.9% of office filings.
- **F12.** The United States held 53.11% of located hepatitis news (lift 1.1); Africa was the most over-represented continent (1.74) and Europe the most under-represented (0.82).
- **F13.** Among US states with 50 or more located articles, Massachusetts (3.24) and California (2.63) had the most over-represented hepatitis coverage, and New Jersey (0.19) and Texas (0.5) the least.
- **F14.** Uttar Pradesh held 24.93% of located Indian hepatitis news, 1.96 times its share of Indian news.
- **F15.** Hepatitis coverage as a share of US news rose 2.7-fold from 2023 to 2025, while it fell in China, Australia and the United Kingdom and was nearly flat in India.
- **F16.** British hepatitis coverage was 26.2 points more negative than British news overall.

1. Introduction

Viral hepatitis is a leading infectious cause of death worldwide, and most people who carry hepatitis B or C do not know it. News coverage shapes whether the public and policy-makers treat the disease as urgent: whether outbreaks are reported, whether screening and vaccination are discussed, and which countries are seen as affected. Yet coverage is rarely measured as data in its own right. Surveillance systems record cases. Bibliometric studies record research. Few sources record attention, meaning how much of the news hepatitis takes, and when, where and in what tone.

This paper and its dataset do that. They combine three records for one topic: a global news index, research papers and patents. Each comparison uses a denominator, so that growth in the index or in publishing is not mistaken for growth in interest. The companion dataset publishes an article-level sample (5,023 rows) and full coverage tables, so every figure here can be re-derived. The [Prism News API](#) serves the full history.

2. Data and methods

News. The Prism news index holds articles from outlets worldwide; non-English articles are indexed in English translation. Each article carries its opening text (the first few sentences), a primary location, a graded tone label, an editorial priority rating (1–9), themes, keywords and named organisations. We count unique article identifiers; repeated rows for the same article are removed. When this release was built, 92.88% of the index was readable, so all counts are lower bounds.

Matching. An article is about hepatitis when its opening text contains *hepatitis* as a whole word. This covers hepatitis A, B, C, D and E as well as alcoholic, autoimmune and drug-induced hepatitis, and leaves out steatohepatitis, which is written as one word. The index also carries journal abstracts and commercial notices, so three families of matches are excluded:

- journal abstracts, recognised by structured headings ("background:", "objectives:"), a title run directly into the abstract, or study-design phrases ("we investigated", "retrospectively");
- market-research notices ("market size", "CAGR", sample-request links);
- templated stock updates ("an update from ... is now available").

Together these removed 29,534 of 49,665 raw matches (59.47%). The excluded items were not hand-checked, so some news reports may have been removed with them. One reviewer then read 40 randomly drawn matched openings. 37 referred to hepatitis the disease as part of what was reported (precision 92.5%), and in 29 (72.5%) hepatitis was the main subject. The three false positives were a crime story, company boilerplate naming hepatitis B as a therapy area, and garbled spam. Eleven retained items (27.5%) were still journal abstracts written in ordinary prose; they are counted as relevant, but they mean the news count includes some research reporting.

Measures. Coverage over time is expressed per 10,000 articles in the index that month or year, because the index grew from 11,807,177 articles in 2019 to 26,990,006 in 2025. Seasonality uses each year's within-year month shares, averaged over the complete years 2019–2025. Geography, tone, priority and themes use January 2023 – July 2026. Geography is expressed as lift: a country's share of hepatitis articles divided by its share of all located articles. Place tags derived from ordinary words ("Congress", "Earth", "Winter", "Cloud") were treated as unlocated in every location field, which removes 15.3% of city-tagged articles. Of the 9,981 hepatitis articles in that window, 4,293 (43.0%) carry a primary country.

Research and patents. Research papers are de-duplicated articles and reviews (2000–2025) with hepatitis in the title. Repository deposits and veterinary senses (mouse hepatitis virus, duck, fowl and other animal hepatitis) are excluded. Patent families (2006–2024) use the same title rule, are counted once per filing office, and exclude the same veterinary senses.

3. Results

How much and when

The index holds 20,131 hepatitis articles from January 2019 to July 2026. Raw counts rose from 2,398 in 2019 to 4,045 in 2025, but the share of all news did not: 2.03 per 10,000 in 2019, 1.03 in 2024 and 1.5 in 2025 (Table 1). The high point was 2022, at 2.08 per 10,000, 1.93 times the 2021 share. The highest monthly share was May 2022, at 6.69 per 10,000, with April 2022 next at 5.16 (Figure 1). These were the months in which health agencies in the United Kingdom, the United States and elsewhere reported clusters of acute hepatitis of unknown origin in children. May 2022 alone held 1,046 articles, 26.3% of the year's total. After mid-2022 the highest month was December 2025 (3.66 per 10,000), the month in which the US Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices met on the hepatitis B birth dose. The share in 2025 was 1.46 times that of 2024.

Year	Hepatitis articles	All articles in index	Per 10,000
2019	2,398	11,807,177	2.03
2020	1,910	16,230,014	1.18
2021	1,864	17,281,220	1.08
2022	3,978	19,115,515	2.08
2023	2,435	20,484,506	1.19
2024	2,393	23,311,896	1.03
2025	4,045	26,990,006	1.5

Table 1. Hepatitis articles per year and as a share of the index. 2026 (January–July) is partial and omitted.

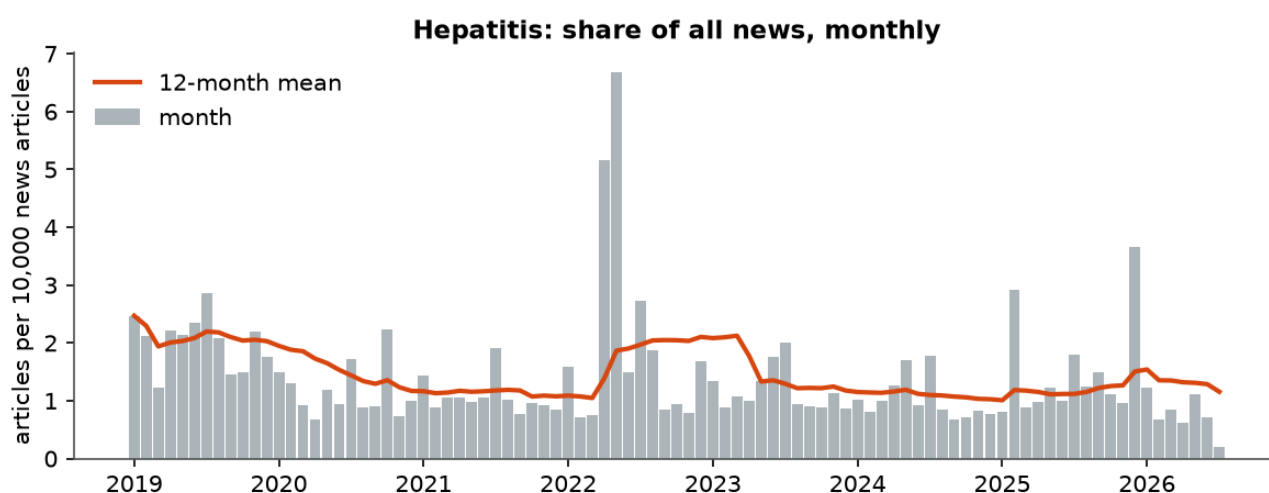


Figure 1. Hepatitis coverage as articles per 10,000 news articles, monthly, January 2019 – July 2026. Bars are months; the line is the 12-month mean.

Coverage has one regular peak (Figure 2). July holds 12.48% of a typical year's hepatitis articles, 1.5 times an even spread of 8.33%. July is the month of World Hepatitis Day (28 July), when health agencies and patient groups publish statements and campaigns. May (11.95%) is also high, but that average is raised by the 2022 outbreak. November is the quietest month (6.15%).

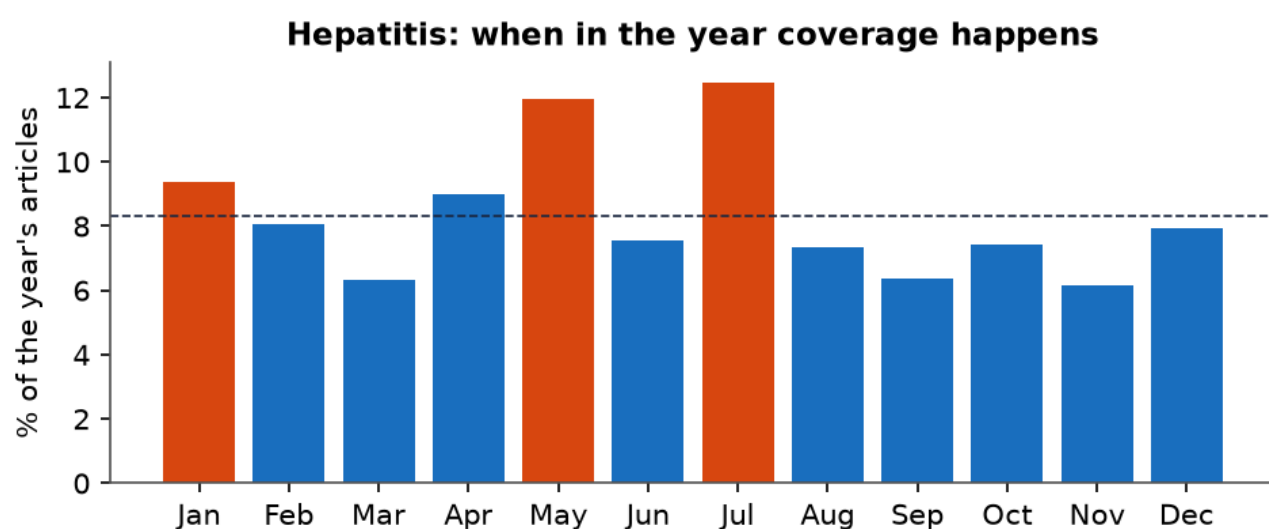


Figure 2. Share of each year's hepatitis articles published in each month, averaged over 2019–2025. Dashed line = an even spread (8.3% per month).

Where

Between January 2023 and July 2026, 4,293 hepatitis articles carried a primary country. The United States holds the largest share (53.11%), with a lift of 1.1: hepatitis takes about the same share of American news as of news overall. India's share (11.23%) comes with a lift of 0.85. Australia (1.34) and China (1.31) are over-represented, and the United Kingdom is close to expected (0.97) (Table 2, Figure 3). Only these five countries have 100 or more located hepatitis articles.

Country	Located hepatitis articles	Share %	Lift vs all news
United States	2,280	53.11	1.1
India	482	11.23	0.85
United Kingdom	243	5.66	0.97
China	148	3.45	1.31
Australia	123	2.87	1.34

Table 2. Countries with 100 or more located hepatitis articles, January 2023 – July 2026, with lift against all located news.

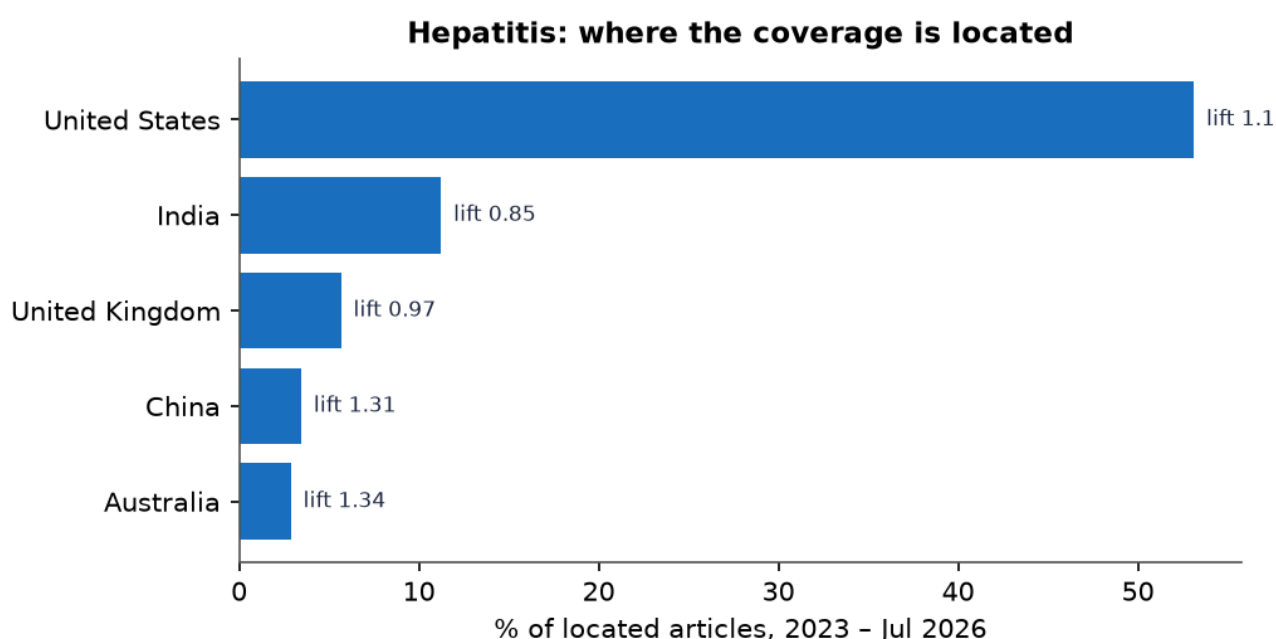


Figure 3. Leading countries by share of located hepatitis articles, 2023 – Jul 2026, labelled with lift against all located news.

Geo intelligence: continents, states and shifting attention

World and continents. A world lift map is not drawn for this topic: with only five countries above 100 located articles, most of the map would be grey. Continent lift gives the broader picture (Figure 5, left). Africa (1.74), Oceania (1.22) and South America (1.1) are over-represented, North America is close to expected (1.07), and Asia (0.85) and Europe (0.82) are under-represented. Africa's lift rests on 285 located articles, so it is a coverage signal, not a burden estimate.

Continent	Located articles	Share %	Lift
Africa	285	6.6	1.74
Oceania	138	3.19	1.22
South America	83	1.92	1.1
North America	2,257	52.23	1.07
Asia	908	21.01	0.85
Europe	650	15.04	0.82

Table 3. Located hepatitis articles by continent, January 2023 – July 2026, with lift against all located news.

States. Within the United States, 1,690 hepatitis articles carry a state (Table 4, Figure 4). Nine states have at least 50 articles. Louisiana has the highest lift (7.55), but it is a tagging artefact: 14 of its 17 sample rows are December 2025 reports on the federal vaccine committee meeting that name Louisiana only in passing. Among the other eight, Massachusetts (3.24) and California (2.63) are the most over-represented against each state's share of American news. California also leads by count (443 articles). New Jersey (0.19) and Texas (0.5) are the most under-represented. Within India, 361 hepatitis articles carry a state. Only Uttar Pradesh has 50 or more: it holds 24.93% of located Indian hepatitis news, 1.96 times its share of Indian news. Kerala (4.21) and Haryana (2.6) have high lifts on fewer than 50 articles each and are not ranked here. No India state map is drawn, because only four states reach 30 articles.

United States: state	Articles	Lift
Louisiana (tagging artefact)	57	7.55
Massachusetts	130	3.24
California	443	2.63
New York	269	1.37
Washington	55	1.24
Pennsylvania	72	0.71
Florida	65	0.71
Texas	50	0.5
New Jersey	60	0.19

Table 4. US states with at least 50 located hepatitis articles, January 2023 – July 2026, from highest to lowest lift. Lift = the state's share of the country's located hepatitis articles ÷ its share of all located news from that country.

Hepatitis: states of United States by lift

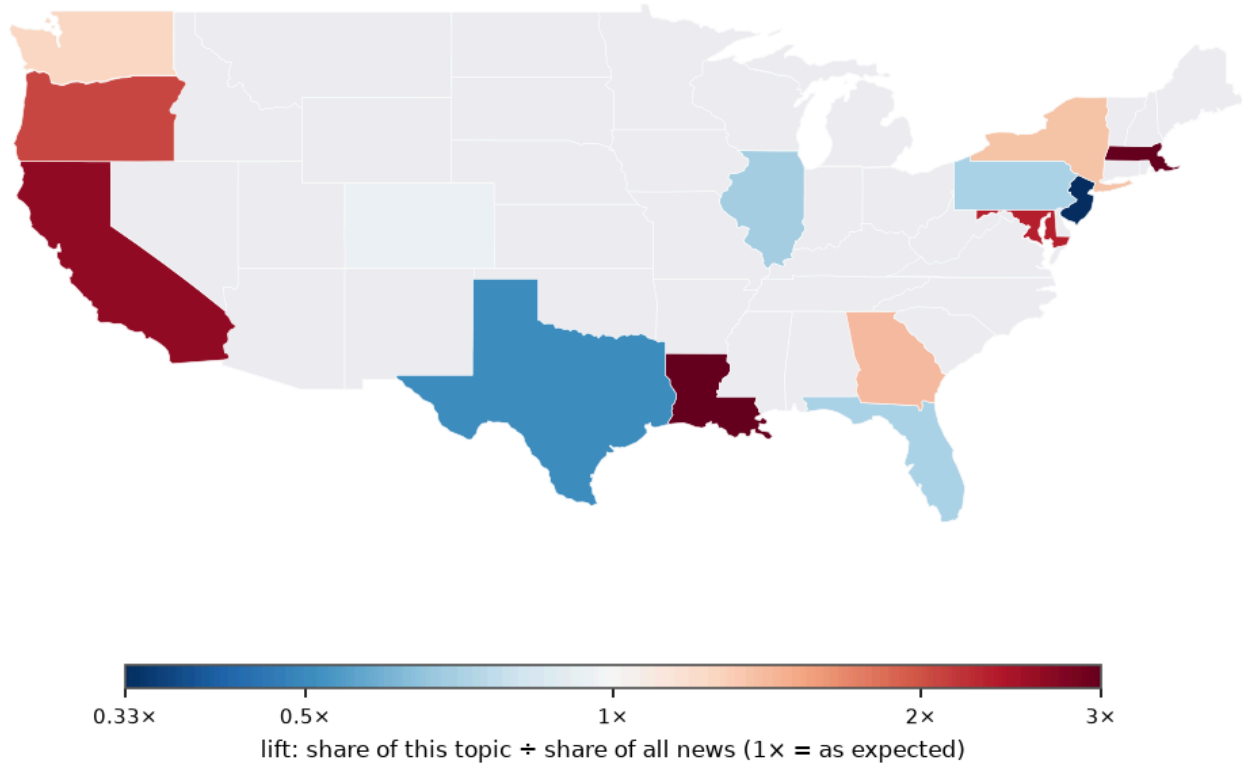


Figure 4. Lift of each US state's share of located hepatitis articles against its share of all located US news, January 2023 – July 2026 (grey = fewer than 30 articles).

Shifting attention. Attention moves between countries from year to year (Figure 5, right). Measured as hepatitis articles per 10,000 of each country's located news, the United States rose from 0.82 in 2023 to 2.21 in 2025 (2.7 times), the only rise among the five countries. Over the same years attention fell in China (1.93 to 1.16), Australia (2.31 to 1.35) and the United Kingdom (5.21 per 10,000), the year of the paediatric hepatitis alerts.

Tone by country. Hepatitis coverage is more negative than each country's news overall, but by very different margins. In the United Kingdom, 63.1% of tone-labelled hepatitis articles are negative, against 36.9% of British news, a gap of 26.2 points. The gap is 12.3 points in the United States (45.4% against 33.1%) and 5.1 points in India (46.3% against 41.2%).

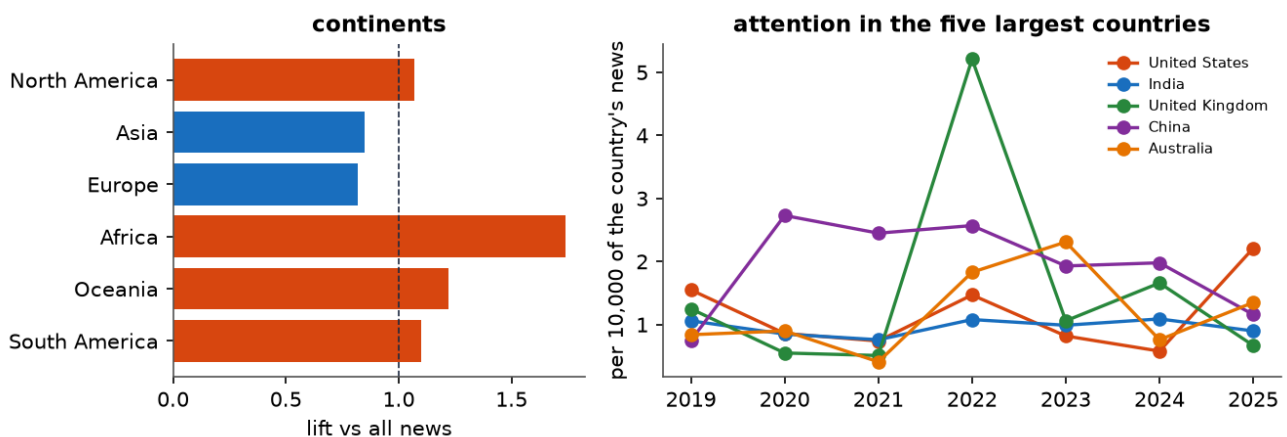


Figure 5. Left: lift by continent, January 2023 – July 2026. Right: hepatitis articles per 10,000 of each country's located news, 2019–2025, for the five countries with the most articles.

Tone, urgency and themes

Hepatitis coverage is far more urgent than news in general, but not much more negative (Figure 6). Among articles with a tone label, 36.1% are negative, against 33.6% across the index (1.07 times), and 59.3% are positive. Editorial priority puts 81.5% of hepatitis articles at critical level (7 or higher), against 42.6% of all news (1.91 times). The tone pattern differs by year: in 2019 and 2022 negative articles outnumbered positive ones (2,093 against 1,589 in 2022), while in the other complete years positive articles outnumbered negative ones.

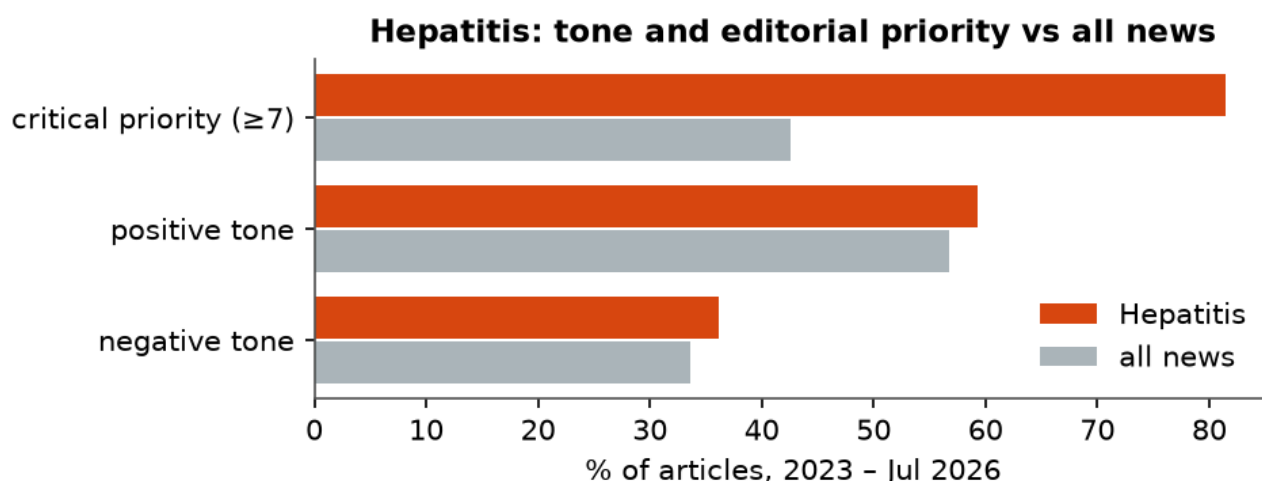


Figure 6. Tone and the share rated critical priority, hepatitis articles vs all news, 2023 – Jul 2026.

Themes show what hepatitis stories are about (Table 5). Vaccination dominates the most specific themes: vaccination and immunisation policy guidelines (471.32 times their rate in all news), combination vaccines, herd immunity, vaccine mandates and vaccine hesitancy (6.19% of themed articles). Foodborne outbreaks (3.98%) and waterborne infectious agents (3.7%) are consistent with stories about food- and water-borne forms such as hepatitis A and E, though the themes do not name the virus. The link between hepatitis and liver cancer appears in 4.57% of themed articles.

Theme	Articles	Share %	Lift
vaccination and immunization policy guidelines	244	4.95	471.32
combination vaccines (e.g., mmr, dtap)	112	2.27	218.01
herd immunity and population-level protection	194	3.94	209.18
vaccine education and healthcare provider training	108	2.19	182.64
vaccine mandates and policy debates	180	3.65	173.07
vaccine hesitancy and public perception	305	6.19	165.36
immunization schedule guidelines by age group	225	4.57	123.45
waterborne infectious agents	182	3.7	108.73
foodborne illness outbreaks	196	3.98	74.61
liver cancer and hepatitis connections	225	4.57	61.65

Table 5. Themes most specific to hepatitis coverage (lift against all themed news), January 2023 – July 2026.

The organisations named most often are health agencies and drug makers: the World Health Organization (702 articles), the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (642, plus 1,094 articles where the abbreviation was mis-linked to another entity), the American Academy of Pediatrics (343), the US Department of Health and Human Services (285), Gilead (177) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (164).

Research attention and invention

Research on hepatitis is a declining share of the scientific literature. Papers with hepatitis in the title fell from 12.35 per 10,000 papers in 2015 to 8.28 in 2025, a 33% fall in share, after a high of 15.61 in 2001. Between 2015 and 2025, 76,394 such papers were published. The most-cited include clinical guidelines for hepatitis B and C and global estimates of their prevalence [1–6].

News attention does not track research attention (Figure 7). Research share fell steadily, while news share fell to a low in 2021, jumped in 2022 and rose again in 2025.

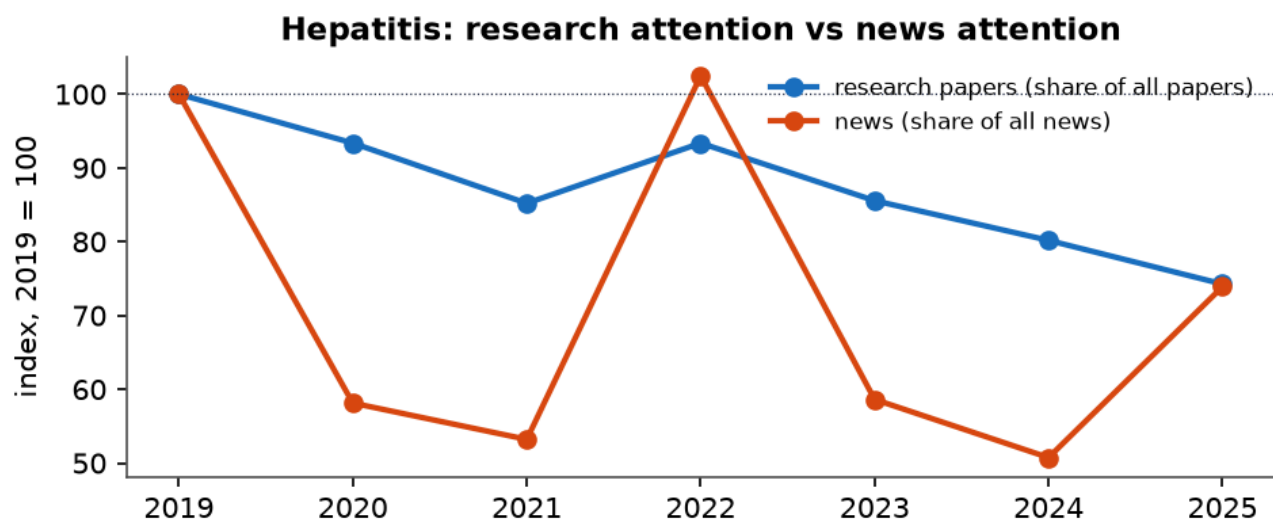


Figure 7. Research papers with hepatitis in the title (share of all papers) and hepatitis news (share of all news), each indexed to 2019 = 100.

Patenting also fell: 837 hepatitis-related patent families were published in 2015 and 412 in 2024 (0.49 times, a 50.8% fall). China's office holds 44.9% of office filings from 2015 to 2024 (each family counted once per office), followed by the United States (10.8%), international applications (9.5%) and the European office (8.5%) (Figure 8). The leading technology classes are medical preparations (A61K, 1,308 families), heterocyclic compounds (C07D, 377), peptides (C07K, 331) and nucleic-acid testing (C12Q, 321): drugs, vaccines and diagnostics.

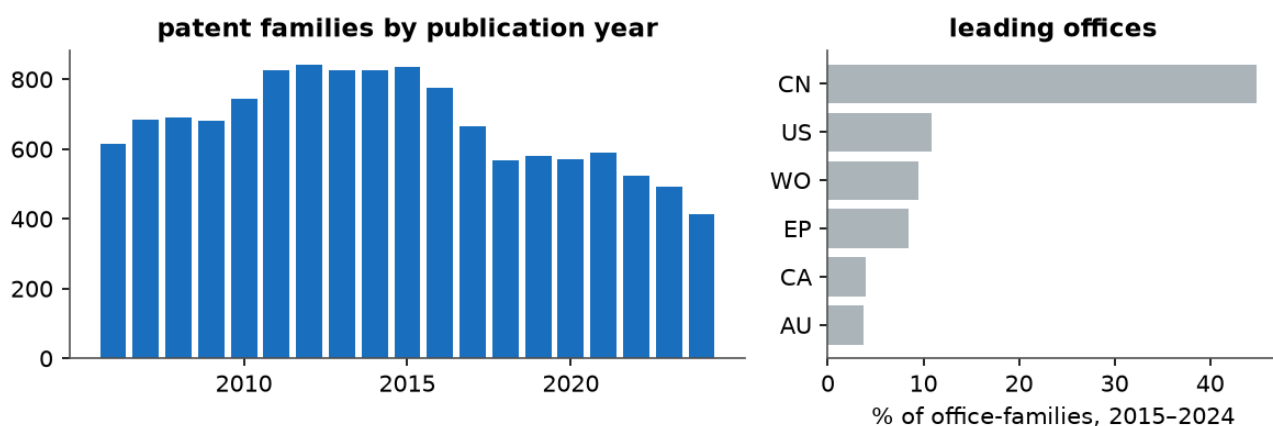


Figure 8. Hepatitis-related patent families by publication year (left) and the leading filing offices, 2015–2024 (right).

4. Discussion

Three points matter for anyone who uses news as a record of hepatitis. First, coverage measures attention, and hepatitis attention is driven by events rather than by the steady burden of chronic infection. The largest peak in the period was an outbreak of unexplained paediatric hepatitis, and the next came in the month of a vaccine policy decision in one country. Chronic hepatitis B and C, which cause most hepatitis deaths, appear mainly through World Hepatitis Day in July, trial results and research reporting. Second, geography in this topic is thin. Fewer than half of articles carry a country, and only five countries have 100 located articles, so country and state lifts should be read as indications. The United States dominates by count but is close to its expected weight, while Africa, where much of the hepatitis B burden lies, is over-represented on a small base. Third, a keyword search for hepatitis in a news index needs heavy filtering: patterns for research abstracts and commercial notices removed 59.47% of raw matches.

Research, invention and news run on different clocks. Research and patent output on hepatitis have both declined as shares since the mid-2010s, while news attention moves with outbreaks and policy. The dataset lets researchers link the three, for example to test whether outbreak coverage in a country is followed by research or screening activity there.

5. Limitations

- **Index availability.** 92.88% of the index was readable at build time, so counts are lower bounds. Shares and lifts are less affected, because the missing part is spread across topics.
- **Coverage after May 2026.** The index thins after May 2026, so 2026 is partial and is excluded from year comparisons.
- **Matching.** Matching uses the article opening. Articles that mention hepatitis only later are missed, 7.5% of matches are not about hepatitis, and 27.5% of retained items are journal abstracts.
- **Thin geography.** Only 43.0% of articles carry a country; state counts are small and can be moved by a few stories, as Louisiana's December 2025 rows show.
- **Place tags from ordinary words.** Place tags derived from ordinary words were treated as unlocated (15.3% of city-tagged articles), so some genuinely located articles may also have been dropped.
- **Machine labels.** Location, tone, priority, themes and organisations are machine-labelled. The city field is noisy and is not analysed; organisation labels contain linking errors.
- **Outlet mix.** The index over-represents English-language outlets, which shapes both seasonality and geography.
- **Research and patent counts.** These match titles only. Office shares reflect filing practice.

Data availability

The dataset (article sample, monthly and country tables, research and patent tables, all metrics) is released under CC BY-NC 4.0 with this paper. The sample holds 5,023 of 20,116 matched articles to 31 July 2026. Full article text, headlines, publishers, later articles and other topics are served by the Prism News API: <https://github.com/fliarbi/prism-news-api>

(base URL <https://radar-api.fliarbi.com/news>). A worked query: prism-news trends "hepatitis" --since 2019-01-01 --until 2026-07-31 --granularity monthly.

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