



Photo/WHO

28 July 2016 – On World Hepatitis Day (WHD), [WHO](#) is [urging](#) countries to take rapid action to improve knowledge about the disease, and to increase access to testing and treatment services. Today, only 1 in 20 people with viral hepatitis know they have it. And just 1 in 100 with the disease is being treated.

"The world has ignored hepatitis at its peril," said Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General. "It is time to mobilize a global response to hepatitis on the scale similar to that generated to fight other communicable diseases like HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis."

Around the world 400 million people are infected with hepatitis B and C, more than 10 times the number of people living with HIV, and an estimated 1.45 million people died of the disease in 2013.

Data that has recently become available, shows that in the WHO European Region an estimated 13.3 million people live with chronic hepatitis B (1.8% of adults) and an estimated 15

million people with hepatitis C (2.0% of adults). Hepatitis B causes about 36 000 deaths and hepatitis C about 86 000 deaths per year in WHO European Member States.

Hepatitis A and E are typically caused by ingestion of contaminated food or water while hepatitis B, C and D usually occur as a result of blood-to-blood contact with infected body fluids (e.g. from blood transfusions or invasive medical procedures using contaminated equipment). Hepatitis B and C can also be transmitted through sexual contact, although this is less common with hepatitis C.

WORLD HEPATITIS DAY | JULY 28th 

KNOW HEPATITIS ACT NOW

GET TESTED!

95% of people with hepatitis do not know they are infected

Due to lack of awareness and poor access to hepatitis tests

KNOW HEPATITIS GET TESTED DEMAND TREATMENT

The graphic features a grid of 100 human icons. 95 icons are green, representing those who do not know they are infected. 5 icons are red, representing those who do know they are infected. The text '95%' is large and green, with 'of people with hepatitis do not know they are infected' in white. The text 'Due to lack of awareness and poor access to hepatitis tests' is in white. The bottom banner has three colored segments: blue for 'KNOW HEPATITIS', red for 'GET TESTED', and green for 'DEMAND TREATMENT'.

Elimination

In May 2016, at the World Health Assembly, 194 governments adopted the first-ever [Global Health Sector Strategy on viral hepatitis](#) and agreed to the first-ever global targets. The strategy includes a target to treat 8 million people for hepatitis B or C by 2020. The longer term aim is to reduce new viral hepatitis infections by 90% and to reduce the number of deaths due to viral hepatitis by 65% by 2030

from 2016 figures.

In working towards [Goal no. 3](#) of the [UN’s Sustainable Development Goals](#) for good health and well-being, the strategy is ambitious, but the tools to achieve the targets are already in hand. An effective vaccine and treatment for hepatitis B exists. There is no vaccine for hepatitis C but there has been dramatic progress on treatment for the disease in the past few years.

The theme for this year’s [global campaign](#) is therefore “Elimination”. The theme of elimination for WHD 2016 can easily be adapted for local use; to achieve elimination, greater awareness, increased diagnosis and key interventions including universal vaccination, blood and injection safety, harm reduction and treatment are all needed. This means every activity that addresses viral hepatitis is a step towards elimination.

Join the fight: @WHO #WorldHepatitisDay