

The Government of Pakistan has also been able to procure hepatitis C curative treatment at similarly low prices. Providing curative treatment to all those currently diagnosed with hepatitis C could also reduce healthcare costs in Pakistan within three years. Meanwhile, Pakistan is faced with one of the highest new annual infection rates of hepatitis C virus and is launching a new infection control and injection safety plan on the occasion of World Hepatitis Day to stop transmission.

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For the vast majority of the 325 million people living with hepatitis B and/or C, accessing testing and treatment remains beyond reach.

Of the estimated 257 million living with hepatitis B infection:

- 10.5% (27 million) knew their infection status in 2016
- Of those people diagnosed, only 17% (4.5 million) received treatment in 2016
- In 2016, 1.1 million people newly developed chronic hepatitis B infection—a primary cause of liver cancer.

Of the estimated 71 million people living with chronic hepatitis C infection in 2015.

- 19% (13.1 million) knew their infection status in 2017.
- Of those people diagnosed, 15% (2 million) received curative treatment in that same year. Overall, between 2014 and 2017, 5 million people have received hepatitis C curative treatment.
- In 2017, 1.75 million people newly developed chronic hepatitis C infection.

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WHO's global hepatitis strategy, endorsed by all WHO Member States, aims to reduce new hepatitis infections by 90% and deaths by 65% between 2016 and 2030.

On World Hepatitis Day 2019, WHO calls on all countries to “Invest in eliminating hepatitis” through costing, budgeting and financing of elimination services within their universal health coverage plans. While there has been broad support among WHO Member States in adopting the WHO hepatitis elimination strategy, with 124 out of 194 countries developing hepatitis plans, over 40% of country plans lack dedicated budget lines to support elimination efforts.

WHO has also released online calculators (www.hepccalculator.org and www.hepbcalculator.org) designed to help decision makers to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of their hepatitis treatment programmes.

There are five types of viral hepatitis infections – A, B, C, D and E. Over 95% of deaths are caused by chronic hepatitis B and C infections, while hepatitis A and E rarely cause life-threatening illnesses. Hepatitis D is an additional infection occurring in people living with hepatitis B.

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For World Hepatitis Day 2019 “Invest in eliminating hepatitis”, WHO will be joining the Government of Pakistan in inaugurating the Prime Minister’s Initiative for hepatitis in Islamabad, Pakistan. This is a country with one of the fastest growing hepatitis C epidemics in the world, but also in the process of adopting progressive policies to reverse the tide.

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