Bumper end of year edition

Stories of 2016

Africa meets to discuss hepatitis

Civil society survey

Make your voice heard

WHA's new vision for 2017
As 2016 draws to an end, we have been reflecting on the many things that have been accomplished this year. The adoption of the first ever global strategy has put viral hepatitis firmly on the global health agenda and we, the hepatitis community, are now at a critical juncture: we have the global strategy and the tools, but to ensure we meet our elimination goal in the next 14 years we need to amplify our call and join together under one voice. In this vein, we’re delighted to present our new strategic plan for 2017-2018, as well as our new WHA Executive Board.

With elimination at the forefront of our minds, this month we have been focusing our efforts on initiatives that promote key interventions needed to reach this goal. Specifically this month we celebrated European HIV-Hepatitis Testing Week and promoted the launch of the Global State of Harm Reduction 2016 report.

We hope you enjoy reading!

Raquel Peck
Chief Executive Officer
World Hepatitis Alliance

Want to contribute?
We welcome your contributions so please get in touch at contact@worldhepatitisalliance.org to have your news included in future issues and feel free to share the magazine with your network.

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WHA member group FupaHep organised a demonstration outside the Ministry of Health in Santiago, Chile, calling for access to new hepatitis C medicines. The demonstration attracted lots of media attention and the group were interviewed on radio and TV channels. The day proved a success and resulted in a meeting with the Ministry of Health. Find out more here.

The 2015 launch of the HCV Quest Global Patient Survey provided an insight into the impact viral hepatitis has on a patient’s personal and social life - key to combatting this global disease. Recognising how useful country specific data can be in national advocacy, in March this year we launched 22 country reports and the HCV Quest Toolkit. The toolkit provides fully adaptable resources to support advocacy activities and help disseminate survey findings, helping groups challenge governments to do more to fight viral hepatitis. Explore the HCV Quest Toolkit here.

At the EASL International Liver Congress, WHA CEO Raquel Peck addressed an audience of 11,000 in the event opening ceremony. In her speech, Raquel reinforced the importance of the patient voice in efforts to tackle hepatitis and the need for a multi-stakeholder commitment to achieve elimination. Read more about EASL ILC 2016 here.

In February we launched Tools For Change, a webinar series aimed at educating and up skilling viewers on various aspects of advocacy and the tools needed to effectively lobby for change. Panellists from WHO, national governments and WHA member organisations shared their perspectives on how patient advocates can best engage with policy makers to effect real, on-the-ground change. Watch the webinars here.

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The viral hepatitis landscape changed forever in May when the World Health Assembly adopted the first ever global strategy on viral hepatitis. By adopting the strategy, governments across the globe set the goal to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030, signaling the greatest global commitment in viral hepatitis to date. Find out more about the Global Health Sector Strategy on viral hepatitis and the central role played by patients in achieving its adoption here.

Following the success of Tools for Change, in June we launched Knowledge for Change, a webinar series aimed at educating patients and patient representatives about relevant topics in the area of viral hepatitis, including access to medicines, access to diagnostics and access to generic hepatitis C medicines. Watch the webinars back here.

In July we celebrated the most successful World Hepatitis Day to date. The sixth official WHD took place on 28 July under the WHA theme ‘NOhep – Eliminate Hepatitis’ and WHO ‘Know hepatitis - Act now’. The impact of WHD grew substantially this year with over 1,100 events taking place in 174 countries as well as 105 national governments and 59 WHO Country Offices commemorating the day. WHD also marked a historic moment for the hepatitis community – the launch of NOhep, the first global movement to eliminate viral hepatitis. NOhep was launched in 77 countries throughout the world and here in London, we marked the launch with the world’s first ever ‘die-in’ for viral hepatitis and an illuminated banner in Piccadilly Circus. How was WHD celebrated in your country? Read the full WHD 2016 Global Summary Report here.
AUGUST

August focused on building on the momentum from WHD, with national governments announcing commitment to elimination. Africa launched their “Prevention, Care and Treatment of viral hepatitis in the African Region: Framework for action 2016–2020”, building on the Global Strategy and looking at ways to effectively tackle this disease. Fully embracing elimination, the Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina MP, issued a special WHD message acknowledging the goal of the elimination of hepatitis B and C and expressed the government’s commitment to reaching this target. In Georgia the government approved the 2016-2020 National Strategy on Elimination of Hepatitis C and declared that hepatitis C will be virtually eliminated by 2020 in Georgia. Find out more about these commitments here.

SEPTEMBER

The journey towards the elimination of viral hepatitis continued in September with the adoption of WHO European Regional Office’s Action Plan for viral hepatitis. This signalled an important step forward in Europe as it cements the commitment of 53 governments to effectively tackle these diseases. Find out more about the Action Plan here.

OCTOBER

In October the Egyptian Government made an indisputable commitment that could take the country from suffering from the highest hepatitis C prevalence worldwide to virtually hepatitis C free by 2020. At the Egyptian Liver Day event, the Minister of Health announced that since the beginning of 2016, more than 800,000 people have been treated for hepatitis C and the country aims to treat 1 million patients by the end of the year. Read more on Egypt’s commitment to elimination here.
Regional Consultation on Viral Hepatitis Control in the WHO African Region

Brazzaville, Congo

Following the launch of the document “Prevention, Care and Treatment of viral hepatitis in the African Region: Framework for action 2016–2020” in August, Member States in the African Region met in Brazzaville, Congo on 23-25 November to discuss ways to tackle viral hepatitis in one of the hardest hit areas of the world. The meeting was attended by WHO Regional Director, Dr Matshidiso Moeti, 18 national governments and civil society including WHA. The event showed that clear support for actions towards elimination is now emerging in the region, most notably with the introduction of the birth dose of hep B vaccine, which will be critical for preventing mother to child transmission.

European HIV-Hepatitis Testing Week 2016

Now in its fourth year and the second time hepatitis testing has been included, European HIV-Hepatitis Testing Week took place from 18-25 November. The testing week spanned the length and breadth of the continent with 519 organisations participating from 49 countries. We raised awareness of the week and the importance of testing for viral hepatitis through our social media channels as well as participating in a Twitter chat along with European Testing Week, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, European AIDS Treatment Group and The Hepatitis B and C Public Policy Association. The chat focused on why people should test for HIV and viral hepatitis and what prevents people from getting tested.

Missed the Twitter chat? Check out the #time2test Storify here.

Global State of Harm Reduction 2016

Did you know that people who inject drugs (PWID) are the group with the highest prevalence of hepatitis C, an estimated 67%? Yet the drive to scale-up needle and syringe programmes (NSP) has stalled since 2014, with no new countries setting up NSP.

Released this month, the Global State of Harm Reduction 2016 report illustrates just how much needs to be done to support PWID in order to meet the goal of elimination by 2030. We need to raise awareness and take action on this issue if we are to achieve a world with NOhep!

You can read the report, and find infographics to share on social media here.
Viral hepatitis has been getting traction within the global health agenda in the past few years with 2016 proving to be a truly pivotal time for the disease. In September 2015 the global community came together at the inaugural World Hepatitis Summit to call for a concerted global action towards the disease; this was then followed by its recognition as a global development priority in the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and in May this year 194 governments committed to the goal of eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030 by unanimously adopting the first-ever global strategy on viral hepatitis.

Despite these achievements we are still faced with an inexcusable death toll and heart-breaking tales of suffering. Now that elimination is the accepted goal, we have adapted our Global Strategy 2017-2018 to concentrate on the three fundamental areas that must be addressed to make this possible:

- Raising awareness of viral hepatitis
- Advocating for viral hepatitis
- Ending the social injustice of viral hepatitis

We believe this revised approach ensures that the needs of the people living with viral hepatitis continue to be at the very heart of our work and that all our actions are in line with our single overarching vision: a world free from viral hepatitis.

Our Executive Board plays a vital role in the organisation’s governance and, crucially, provides representation for our patient groups on a regional level. The Board also encourages our members to work together, both nationally and regionally, to give our activities greater cohesion and strength.

We thank the outgoing board members for their invaluable contribution to our work and their commitment to the cause. Their input over the last two years has been key to the success of WHA’s activities. The next few years will be pivotal in the fight against viral hepatitis so we are greatly looking forward to working with our new board members.

Want to find more about our plans for the next year? Read our Strategic Plan 2017-2018 here.
What’s the real viral hepatitis situation in your country?

Earlier this year the first ever global strategy on viral hepatitis was adopted and national governments seem ever more committed to tackling the disease. However, we know that what governments say they are doing is not always an accurate representation of what’s happening on the ground.

We want to measure where things really stand when it comes to viral hepatitis and as champions in your countries, we want to hear from civil society. If we know the facts, then we can together drive informed action on the ground.

As such, we are running a survey which focuses on three key areas - stigma and discrimination, civil society involvement in government response and access to diagnostics and treatment. All findings will be widely released on World Hepatitis Day 2017.

What’s the real viral hepatitis situation in your country?

Complete the survey here

Expanding our membership base

The World Hepatitis Alliance continues to grow as we welcome three new member organisations this month. Our membership is now made up of 246 groups in 82 countries in every region of the world.

Project Inform (USA)
Through focusing on areas of drug development, bio-medical prevention, education and healthcare access, Project Inform aims to create a generation free from HIV and hepatitis C. The organisation advocates for prevention and affordable healthcare strategies and provides information to people living with hepatitis C.

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) (USA)
AAPCHO strives to be the national leader Asian Pacific community health in America. The elimination of hepatitis B is one of the organisation’s key policy initiatives and the group has been instrumental in making programme and policy changes to address hepatitis B at a national level.

Croatian Association of Treated and Ill with Hepatitis “HEPATOS” - ZAGREB AND ZAGREB COUNTY (Croatia)
Formed by people living with viral hepatitis in cooperation with the expert community, HEPATOS Zagreb works to provide free assistance to others living with the diseases. Their work focuses on prevention, early detection and de-stigmatisation.
**WHA Member updates from around the world**

**Sweden**

WHA member Riksforeningen Hepatit C attended a meeting with the Swedish Department of Health to discuss hepatitis C, new treatments and the NOhep movement. To draw attention to the meeting and the organisation’s efforts to increase access to treatment, they held demonstrations outside parliament, in front of the main train station and a big shopping mall and also placed flyers on cars throughout Göteborg with the slogan “Fight for the right to be cured”.

**Bangladesh**

Last month WHA member the National Liver Foundation of Bangladesh used cricket, the most popular sport in Bangladesh, to help spread the NOhep message. The organisation held a NOhep cricket tournament with the NOhep logo appearing across jerseys, signage and even wickets! The event was televised and a speech was given encouraging people to join the NOhep movement. View photos from the event [here](#).

**Taiwan**

Under the theme of ‘elimination of hepatitis C’, WHA member Taiwan Liver Research Foundation (TLRF) held an educational symposium on 23 October in Kaohsiung Medical University Hospital (KMUH). Over 80 medical professionals attended the event and agreed to run more advocacy activities in their clinics and hospitals in order to raise the profile of hepatitis C among health authorities and the general public.

**United States**

WHA Executive Board Member for the Americas region Su Wang has been spreading the NOhep message to over 9,500 health professionals at the AASLD Liver Meeting in Boston on 11-15 November. Between attending sessions on the latest updates from the world of hepatology, Su could be found distributing free NOhep pins to attendees.

We love to highlight the great work of our members, so get in touch with updates on your national activities.
2016 has been a fantastic year. From every child that has received a vaccine to every patient that has been cured, from national government commitments to the adoption of a Global Elimination Strategy, great progress has been made at all levels. We want to thank each and every one of you for your efforts to fight for a world free from viral hepatitis.

From all at the World Hepatitis Alliance, we wish you happy holidays and a successful 2017.