World Hepatitis Day 2018
Find the Missing Millions
Campaign launch

#HealthForAll
Community calls for Universal Health Coverage by 2030

Wall of Stories
“Late diagnosis left me with cirrhosis”
NOTE FROM OUR CEO

Shocking, almost every person living with viral hepatitis has no idea. Nine in ten people living with hepatitis B or C are unaware of their infection. Without finding these “missing millions”, treatment rates will fall, infection rates will rise and we will lose our opportunity to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030. So this year we are focusing our World Hepatitis Day efforts on diagnosis and are launching the Find the Missing Millions global campaign. Find out more about this year’s campaign and how you can get involved on page 8.

The devastating impact of low diagnosis rates is apparent everywhere we turn this month. Questions over a new study on hepatitis B treatment has led us to stress the importance of screening at-risk groups, namely pregnant women (see page 4), while in our Wall of Stories snapshots, we hear from Rosario from Uruguay who was living with hepatitis C for years before she received her diagnosis completely by chance (turn to page 14).

We look forward to you joining us on the quest to find the missing millions and hope you enjoy reading this month’s hepVoice!

Raquel Peck
Chief Executive Officer

Want to contribute?

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

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THIS MONTH IN NUMBERS

A round-up of some of this month’s stand-out facts and figures:

8 eminent medical professionals spearhead the launch of the NOhep Visionaries Programme for the Asia Pacific region at the APASL Annual Conference on 15 March.

10 hepatitis C infected kidneys have been successfully transplanted into patients without hepatitis C and prevented them from becoming infected, which may prepare the way for increased organ donation.

Almost 3 million people have accessed DAAs for hepatitis C, according to WHO’s new Progress report on access to hepatitis C treatment.

13 WHA members participated in a consensus meeting in Nigeria with the Federal Ministry of Health and the Clinton Health Access Initiative to discuss financing recommendations from our financing for hepatitis C project. The meeting resulted in the creation of a multidisciplinary stakeholder committee and an agreement with WHA members and WHA HQ to build an advocacy strategy to ensure the recommendations are implemented.
Viral hepatitis is making the headlines. Here’s the latest news from the field of viral hepatitis this month.

Hepatitis community rebukes study on hepatitis B treatment in pregnant women
A new study published in the New England Journal of Medicine found that pregnant women who received tenofovir did not experience a lower rate of mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B compared to those who received a placebo. Organisations including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Hepatitis B Foundation have discredited the study due to a small sample size and limited evidence. Mother-to-child remains one of the most common modes of transmission of hepatitis B so it is crucial that all pregnant women are tested. Newborns can be protected from infection by receiving the first dose of the hepatitis B vaccine in the first 24 hours of life. Doctors may also recommend treatment if the mother has a high viral load, highlighting why screening and follow-up care are so fundamental to tackling hepatitis B. Find out more about pregnancy and hepatitis B in this factsheet from the Hepatitis B Foundation.

WHO launches new surveillance protocol
At the Annual Conference of the Asia Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver, WHO launched their new surveillance protocol to improve understanding of the link between viral hepatitis and cirrhosis and liver cancer. The protocol calls for better documentation of the causes of death of cirrhosis and liver cancer that aren’t currently attributed to viral hepatitis. This will be key to obtaining more accurate data on the scope of the issue and improve national elimination strategies.

Side event at the CND highlights disproportionate impact of hepatitis C on people who use drugs
People who inject drugs are disproportionately affected by hepatitis C, and so without access to harm reduction services we cannot hope to eliminate viral hepatitis. To address this issue, we co-sponsored a side event on 16 March at the 61st Session of the Coalition on Narcotic Drugs with Fédération Addiction, International Doctors for Healthier Drug Policies (IDHDP), International Network for People who Use Drugs (INPUD) and Médecins du Monde (MdM). The side event discussed the global state of hepatitis C among people who use drugs and made recommendations to curb the epidemic. A blog summarising the event discussions is available here and you can watch a video recording from the event here.

Macedonia’s first national technical consultation on viral hepatitis action plan
On 23-24 March, civil society organisations and patient groups including WHA member Hepar Centar-Bitola and WHA Board Member for the European region Ivana Dragovic joined government representatives, WHO Europe and epidemiology experts for Macedonia’s first national technical consultation on the viral hepatitis action plan.

Side event at the CND highlights disproportionate impact of hepatitis C on people who use drugs

Improvements in access to hepatitis C treatment
This month a number of countries announced increased access to hepatitis C treatments: the Ministry of Health of Malaysia will start rolling out access to hepatitis C medicines at government hospitals; Chile announced there are sufficient public health reasons to support a compulsory license on hepatitis C treatment; and it was announced that one year on from Australia’s implementation of universal access to the hepatitis C cure, 14% of Australians with hepatitis C have initiated treatment. The news coincides with the launch of WHO’s Progress report on access to hepatitis C treatment that highlights both the opportunities and challenges that exist in increasing access to treatment.
For the Diary

Here are some upcoming events and activities taking place this month.

7 April
World Health Day
Everyone, everywhere has the right to health when they need it but currently at least half of the world’s population is unable to access essential health services. This year, the theme of World Health Day is “Universal Health Coverage (UHC): everyone, everywhere” and WHO aims to inspire, motivate and guide policy-makers to make commitments towards UHC. For more information on UHC and how to participate in World Health Day, turn to page X.

11-15 April
International Liver Congress
EASL’s International Liver Congress is one of the biggest annual meetings in the hepatitis calendar. If you’re attending the event in Paris this year, don’t miss out on our top picks: attend the EASL-WHO joint symposium to hear experts discuss meeting the 2030 elimination targets at 2pm on Saturday 14 April in room South 3; share your experiences on engaging hard-to-reach populations and learn from other community organisations at the ‘Hepatitis Community Best Practice Sharing Poster Session’ on Thursday 12 April 6:30-8pm at the Mercure Paris Vaugirard Porte de Versailles; and visit the Global Hepatitis Summit booth number 425 in the exhibition area to learn more about the NOhep Village that we’ll be bringing to the event in Toronto, Canada in June.

19 April
The NOhep Fight for Elimination Webinar
Join Hep B United, the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR) and the World Hepatitis Alliance on Thursday 19 April at 1pm EDT / 6pm BST for an informative webinar on the global health threat of viral hepatitis and elimination efforts across the globe and in the USA. You’ll also hear about the NOhep movement and how the initiative is helping drive action towards elimination. Register here for the webinar.

24-30 April
World Immunisation Week
Hepatitis B is vaccine preventable but currently only 52% of countries implement the birth dose vaccine, which contributes to the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. Global coverage of the hepatitis B birth dose will be crucial to achieving elimination so this World Immunisation Week we will be highlighting the need for increased prevention methods. The theme of this year’s World Immunisation Week is “Protected Together, #VaccinesWork” and the initiative encourages people at every level to go further in efforts to increase immunisation coverage. Find out how to take part here.

25 April
World Hepatitis Day Webinar
Register now for our exclusive WHD launch webinar on 25 April 2pm BST to hear an overview of this year’s campaign and make the most of the opportunity to ask WHA staff and campaign experts your questions.

Participating in a hepatitis related activity or have an event planned?
Email us or contact us on social media.
In action

Find The Missing Millions.

World Hepatitis Day 2018

300 million people are living with viral hepatitis and don’t know it. Join us on World Hepatitis Day 2018 in the quest to find the missing millions.
Out of the 325 million people living with viral hepatitis globally, upward of 300 million (that’s 9 in 10!) are living with the hepatitis B or hepatitis C without knowing. Without a massive scale-up in diagnosis, treatment rates will fall, infection rates will rise and our opportunity to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030 will be lost.

Under the theme of “Eliminate Hepatitis”, on World Hepatitis Day 2018 we are launching the Find the Missing Millions global campaign that focuses on the importance of screening and linkage to care and calls on all individuals and organisations to take action to find the 300 million people living with viral hepatitis unaware.

How to get involved in this year’s campaign:

USE AND ADAPT OUR CAMPAIGN MATERIALS:
We have created a variety of resources to bring the campaign to life including posters, social media graphics and merchandise designs. Use the campaign materials throughout your activities to promote WHD 2018 and create your own posters with our customisable poster tool. Share these at your events, via social media or on your website. Download the campaign materials here.

ENCOURAGE ACTION BY ORGANISING AN EVENT:
To find the missing millions we must make testing widely available, reach at-risk populations and make the public aware of viral hepatitis and the associated risk factors. Your event can do this by offering tests to the public and raising awareness to encourage people to become advocates in the quest to find the missing millions. Other activities could include informational seminars, marches, concerts, workshops for activists or healthcare professionals, art competitions or flash mobs. For top tips and inspiration, check out the World Hepatitis Day 2018: Find the Missing Missions Campaign Toolkit.

BECOME A CAMPAIGN SUPPORTER:
Show your support for the Find the Missing Millions campaign by adding your organisation name and logo to our campaign supporters list. Doing so will ensure you receive regular updates about the Find the Missing Millions campaign.

MAKE SOME NOISE ON SOCIAL MEDIA:
Channels such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram give everyone with a voice and provides many opportunities to amplify hepatitis issues. Read the World Hepatitis Day 2018: Find the Missing Missions Campaign Toolkit for tips on raising awareness on social media.

ATTEND THE WORLD HEPATITIS DAY 2018 LAUNCH WEBINAR:
Register now for our exclusive WHD launch webinar on 25 April 2pm BST to hear an overview of this year’s campaign and make the most of the opportunity to ask WHA staff and campaign experts your questions.
Health is a human right, but so many across the globe continue to be denied this right. At least half of the world’s population do not have full coverage of essential health services and over 800 million people (12% of the world’s population) spend at least 10% of their household budgets on healthcare.

Universal health coverage (UHC) means that everyone is able to access health services without suffering financial hardship. Governments across the world committed to achieving UHC by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Achieving UHC is particularly important for viral hepatitis as it aims to ensure that the needs of overlooked and underserved populations are met and we know that viral hepatitis overwhelmingly affects the most vulnerable.

To tackle this issue, the World Health Organization held a civil society meeting on HIV, viral hepatitis, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted infections and universal health coverage on 22-23 March. The first-of-its-kind meeting brought together key civil society actors in the sector including WHA representatives and WHA members and encouraged participants to share their experiences, feedback and challenges on UHC. WHA Karine Belondrade delivered an intervention stressing that the voice of people affected by these illnesses must be heard in order to reach UNC and the resounding message of the meeting was that collaboration is key to achieving UHC. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, further stressed this in a statement issued to the meeting, stating that “reaching marginalized communities requires partnership and collaboration with those affected communities and with broader civil society”.

The message is clear: everyone has a role to play in reaching UHC and as such, the theme of World Health Day (7 April 2018) is “Universal Health Coverage (UHC): everyone, everywhere”. Whether you are a civil society organisation, a health worker, a government official or an individual, you can help to stimulate conversation and contribute to helping your country achieving and maintaining UHC. WHO has a number of ideas for how to get involved on its website as well as campaign materials including posters, toolkit, social media graphics, infographics and videos to support your activities.

Take part in World Health Day 2018 – “Together we have a historic opportunity to transform the global public health response.”

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General
“LATE DIAGNOSIS LEFT ME WITH CIRRHOSIS”

Rosario

“Hello, I’m Rosario, I’m 56 and I have hepatitis C. How did I get it? I don’t know! But I know I contracted it a long time ago. It was most likely through a blood transfusion and by thinking that, I have freed myself from stigma. My diagnosis was by complete chance and late – I now have cirrhosis of the liver.

After I received my diagnosis, I felt pain and loneliness. People with hepatitis C continuing to be discriminated against. Personally, as a healthcare professional, I was forced to leave my job. This was something that really affected me because it was my profession and my job for many years - 25 years! When I received the diagnosis, I approached the Asociación de Pacientes Afectados con la Hepatitis (APAHE) and I found out that there is a treatment that cures 90% of cases. And now I’m here, part of the association, fighting and demanding the treatment. It is my constitutional right to receive fair treatment!”

Watch Rosario’s full video story here.

We welcome stories from every corner of the globe and from all those impacted by viral hepatitis; from patients to family members, medical professionals and policy makers - viral hepatitis has a unique experience of each of our lives. Share your story to our Wall of Stories here and help to change the way the world sees viral hepatitis.