

World Hepatitis Day: One Life, One Liver



28th July is World Hepatitis Day and the goal is to raise awareness of viral hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver that leads to severe liver disease and hepatocellular cancer. Every year, the devastating toll of hepatitis claims the lives of over a million people. This year's current theme is **"One Life, One Liver"**, highlighting the need to scale up viral hepatitis prevention, testing and treatment to optimise liver health.

Despite the World Health Organization's goal to eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health problem by 2030, there is a concerning projection. The annual global deaths from Hepatitis B (HBV) are expected to increase by 39% from 2015 to 2030 if the current situation remains unchanged (Hsu et al. 2023).

Unfortunately, the liver's essential functions are often taken for granted, but when affected by viral hepatitis, the consequences can be severe.

The current state of hepatitis infection is silent and liver health awareness is low. Viral hepatitis infections, especially hepatitis B and C cause 1.1 million deaths and 3 million new infections every year. The lack of early symptoms is concerning as it delays detection and intervention. Every day, nearly 8000 new hepatitis B and C infections occur, with many going undiagnosed, leading to over one million hepatitis-related deaths each year. Even when diagnosis is made, the level of treatment received by people living with hepatitis is alarmingly low.

People living with hepatitis cannot afford to wait for life-saving treatments and timely intervention is crucial to improving their health outcomes.

The message is clear: the integration of viral hepatitis elimination with other health services cannot wait. It is essential that easy-to-navigate services at local health facilities are offered to communities to successfully end hepatitis.

Simplified primary care services for viral hepatitis play a crucial role in achieving the following key objectives:

1. All pregnant women living with chronic hepatitis B receive access to treatment. Providing access to hepatitis B birth vaccines for infants is critical to protect them from acquiring the infection at birth.
2. Ensure diagnosis of 90% of people living with hepatitis B and/or hepatitis C.
3. Ensure that 80% of diagnosed individuals receive curative treatment or ongoing care.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant challenges to global health initiatives, including the response to hepatitis. However, despite the setbacks caused by the pandemic, the continued success in reducing hepatitis B infections in children highlights that positive outcomes can be achieved even in the face of adversity.

Source: [WHO](#)

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