90% of hepatitis C patients who complete the course of treatment are cured

Viral hepatitis is one of Egypt's most significant public health challenges, with an estimated 8–10 million persons, or 10% of the population, living with the disease and millions more at risk for infection.

People living with viral hepatitis have an increased risk of cirrhosis and liver cancer, and although not all people infected with viral hepatitis develop these conditions, the medical and economic burden incurred by those who do is significant. Challenges in infection control and unsafe injections contribute to the 150 000 new persons infected annually with viral hepatitis in Egypt.

In recognition of the high prevalence and ongoing transmission, WHO, along with US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other partners, has supported the Ministry of Health to develop a plan of action for the prevention, care and treatment of viral hepatitis.

A comprehensive plan that addresses both prevention and treatment, it focuses on surveillance, infection control and prevention, injection and blood safety, vaccination against hepatitis B, communication, and care and treatment of patients.

A major part of the effort to address hepatitis in Egypt has been the provision of new treatment for Egyptians with late stage liver disease that is simpler to take and has fewer side effects than drugs previously provided under Egypt's national treatment programme.

In a landmark opportunity, the treatment has been made available at one per cent of the cost that it is sold for in the US. The new treatment was made available from 16 October 2014 and will be distributed via the 26 national liver treatment centres located around the country. Over 500 000 people have already applied to take part in the new treatment programme.

The WHO Egypt Office supports the Ministry through the development and implementation of the plan of action. WHO provides support in hepatitis surveillance, infection control training, and raising awareness and communicating about hepatitis C. Using a health systems approach, it also provides support in access to medicines and assistance with public health intellectual property, as well as in the establishment of norms and standards for hepatitis case management.

Unsafe injections are one of the major causes of viral hepatitis transmission in Egypt. On 17 December 2014, WHO will launch a new global injection safety initiative. Egypt will be one of the first countries to benefit from this programme.

Related links

Egypt hosts World Hepatitis Day 2015

To register online for the new treatment

Hepatitis

Plan of action for the prevention, care and treatment of viral hepatitis, Egypt 2014–2018 [pdf 704kb]

Wednesday 30th of April 2025 08:30:41 AM