

20 November 2020 – From 14 to 15 November 2020, hepatitis national stakeholders in Sudan gathered for a WHO workshop in Khartoum to discuss how strategic information can better guide hepatitis elimination efforts. The workshop was organized with the support of the WHO country office in Sudan and the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean as part of a joint collaboration between the Departments of Science, Information and Dissemination and Universal Health Coverage/Communicable Diseases. Before the workshop, meetings and site visits were conducted by the WHO Regional Office Information Systems for Health team to assess the national health information system's capacity to report on viral hepatitis indicators.

Sudan has recently finalized its National Hepatitis Strategic Plan (2019–2025), which highlights the need to strengthen strategic information as a priority for the national response. While some data are available on the epidemiology and coverage indicators, this information has not been consolidated and aligned with the WHO monitoring and evaluation framework for hepatitis B and C (10 core indicators).

Participants reviewed the information available from different data sources to understand the epidemiological situation and assess the response. WHO then shared its tools on hepatitis strategic information, including guidance on acute hepatitis surveillance, a protocol for estimating mortality attributed to hepatitis B and C and guidance on biomarker surveys. Findings from site visits and the health information system assessment were discussed, including priority actions on health information systems. The workshop was a good opportunity to share data from modelling activities conducted by regional and global partners, and to highlight the role of modelling data in strategic planning and guiding future activities.

Participants highlighted that better coordination and communication is needed between the national hepatitis programme and the relevant stakeholders within the Federal Ministry of Health and beyond (e.g. private health sector and civil society organizations). The WHO team also discussed the need to implement an electronic reporting system to ensure accurate and timely reporting of data at the national and subnational levels to support implementation of interventions and decision-making.

The workshop concluded with recommendations for both the national programme and stakeholders, emphasizing the role of data as a core element of the hepatitis response. Key next steps include working to improve acute hepatitis surveillance, implementing the WHO protocol on estimating mortality in two centres in Khartoum and drafting a plan for implementing an electronic system for hepatitis reporting in Sudan.

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