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The global burden of hepatitis in relation to sustainable development goals - 2030 targets

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Introduction: Despite being an international public health challenge, hepatitis has not been prioritized until recently. The WHO estimates 130-150 million people worldwide living with chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection and the number is increasing despite improved treatment. In 2016, the WHO released a global health sector strategy on viral hepatitis based on the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 report. It enlists targets to be achieved about HCV incidence, diagnosis and treatment, taking 2015 as the base year. This analysis aims to understand the global impact of successful achievement of the WHO targets on viremic prevalent cases.

Methods: HCV viremia is defined as the presence of HCV RNA in the serum. A systematic review of published literature was carried out to extract prevalence, incidence and genotype distribution data for 45 countries, in addition to an analysis of NHANES data. Extracted estimates were trended to 2015 based on current diagnosis and drug treatment scenarios. When country-specific studies were unavailable, results were extrapolated from studies based on comparable populations. When gender-specific results were unavailable, gender-specific results from other studies were used after making any appropriate adjustments to reflect differences in age-adjusted risk. Percentage changes according to the WHO targets were applied to 2015 to arrive at the number of cases in 2020 and 2030.

Results: Between 2015 and 2030, there is a considerable decrease in the number of prevalent viremic cases modeled according to the WHO targets. In 2020, the viremic prevalence will be highest in Africa (1.54) and lowest will be in North America (0.76). In 2030, the viremic prevalence will range from 0.15 in North America to 1.0 in Africa.

Conclusion: If the WHO targets are achieved, there would be a considerable decrease in the burden of viremic HCV. Results should be interpreted from a global perspective to better understand inequitable differences in the burden of HCV across geographic regions.

Figure 1: Global comparison of chronic hepatitis C prevalence in 2020

Biography

Ruchika Sharma has joined the DRG Epidemiology team at Bangalore in 2016. She specializes in developing epidemiological forecasts and has worked on indications related to the field of Infectious Disease and Primary Nervous System Epidemiology. Her qualifications include an MPH with special focus on Epidemiology from the Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, India and a BS degree in Dental Surgery. Prior to joining DRG she was a Fellow at the National Health Systems Resource Centre. She was also the Resident Dental Surgeon at UCMS, New Delhi.

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