

Concept note
Focal points

Communications and advocacy package for hepatitis x liver cancer 2021
HSI, MND and COM units

Background

Hepatitis is a liver inflammation caused by viral infection from five types of hepatitis viruses. Chronic hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV) are responsible for 97% of viral hepatitis-related mortality in the Western Pacific Region, for which the heavy burden accounts for an overall 40% (130 million) of the global number of people infected with HBV and HCV.¹ Globally, hepatitis affects 9 times more people than HIV and is the second major killer disease after tuberculosis. In 2016, viral hepatitis caused 1.4 million deaths worldwide—more than HIV or tuberculosis—33% of which were from the Region, amounting to 1200 deaths every day.

Chronic hepatitis has little to no symptoms until its advanced stages, when it progresses to cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) and liver cancer, which is the sixth leading cause of death in the Western Pacific. About 60% of liver cancer cases are attributed to chronic HBV/HCV—for which there is medicine for treatment, and a cure respectively. Early testing and treatment is vital for the prevention of the progression of disease and cirrhosis and the reduction of risk for liver cancer.

While there are effective treatments for these infections, with some countries covering the cost for medicines within their national health insurance schemes, most people who are infected do not know that they are infected. As of 2016, only about 22.9 out of 130 million people living with hepatitis B and hepatitis C are diagnosed; less than 5% receive treatment. The first step is to get a blood test, with the doctor conducting other tests to see the status of the liver function and other medical issues, and starting treatment as necessary. Encouraging people to test for hepatitis and see their health providers for further care and treatment is paramount.

With renewed commitment to the integration of people-centred health services for communicable and noncommunicable diseases, as well as updated information on hepatitis at the global and regional levels upcoming, there is considerable momentum to raise awareness on hepatitis and its linkages to liver cancer. While several information products have been produced on hepatitis, there is a significant gap in exploring how it contributes to risk for cancer. World Cancer Day and World Hepatitis Day 2021 are key events that surface opportunity to explain how hepatitis is a main risk factor for liver cancer, with treatment as prevention. An advocacy package² that goes into detail about the patient's journey—outlining risks, prevention and early detection, and necessary treatment—will be an effective tool in communicating key points. This concept note was prepared with and reflects comments from COM.

Specifically, discussions with DPS and other country focal points have surfaced a need for greater advocacy on hepatitis. Consultations with COM have brought to fore the need to explore channels for dissemination,

¹ The region has 45% (115 million) of the global burden of people living with HBV and 20% (14 million) of the global burden of people living with HCV.

² Includes videos (2-min and micro), infographics and posters for print, social media tiles (including GIFs), and web stories

especially in areas where social media doesn't have considerable reach. To answer for this concern, the proposed package includes materials for print that can be brought to and used in local health centres and other outreach campaigns.

Single overarching communication outcome (SOCO)

People understand the link between chronic hepatitis and liver cancer, and are encouraged to get tested earlier to prevent it.

Target audience

General public The primary audience for these videos is the general public.
Target launch World Hepatitis Day (July 2021), launched on social media channels.³

Distribution

1. **WPRO online platforms** – Social media (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter), website
2. **Event/s, meetings** – The advocacy package will be launched on World Hepatitis Day in July 2021, and subsequently used for related meetings and events.

Note Advocacy and communications package content attached as a table.

³ An animated video for hepatitis x liver cancer was previously developed and approved, disseminated to countries for use. However, it was not officially launched on WPRO channels, and will then be launched on World Cancer Day 2021 on the 4th February, as well as social media tiles developed from the video.

Event	Topic	Format	Target audience	Timeline	Notes
World Hepatitis Day (28 July 2021)	HBV	Video	General public	Dec 2020 - July 2021	Educational. For awareness and knowledge, based on upcoming data. Animated.
		Infographics			Possibly for print as well.
		GIFs			e.g. Maps of countries for hepatitis data
	HCV	Video			Educational. For awareness and knowledge, based on upcoming data. Animated.
		Infographics			Possibly for print as well.
		GIFs			e.g. Maps of countries for hepatitis data + liver cancer data