Let us invest to eliminate viral hepatitis

Viral hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver caused by viruses called hepatitis. There are five types of viral hepatitis: A, B, C, D, and E. Viral hepatitis B and C are common and can cause chronic hepatitis. Once chronic hepatitis occurs, it can progress to cause liver dysfunction, cirrhosis, or cancer, leading to liver failure and death. Viral hepatitis B can be prevented by vaccination, and viral hepatitis C can be treated. The burden is big - that is why we need to invest in it.

Global burden of viral hepatitis

Viral hepatitis B and C affect 325 million people worldwide, causing 1.4 million deaths a year. Globally, among infectious diseases and in terms of mortality, it is second only to tuberculosis. About 9 times as many people are infected with viral hepatitis than with HIV.

It is estimated, in 2017, 1.1 million people were newly infected and developed chronic hepatitis B infection -- and 1.75 million people developed chronic hepatitis C infection.

source: https://www.who.int/hepatitis/news-events/WHO_Global-Hepatitis-Infographic-1.gif?ua=1

Viral hepatitis burden in Myanmar

In Myanmar, a national sero-prevalence survey in 2015 estimated how common viral hepatitis was, with the adjacent graph providing details. About 3.3 million people live with viral hepatitis B and close to 1.3 million live with viral hepatitis C, some of whom go on to develop the disease.

Importantly, Myanmar started viral hepatitis C treatment through the public sector in 2017. By end 2018, 6,000 people had received treatment.

Viral hepatitis is preventable.

An effective vaccine exists to prevent viral hepatitis B. For viral hepatitis C, an effective treatment is available. Globally, an estimated 80% of people living with viral hepatitis B or C are lacking prevention, testing and treatment services.

It is estimated that US$ 6 billion per year would be needed in low- and middle-income countries globally, to achieve elimination targets by 2030. Approx US$ 0.5 billion were invested in 2016, mainly from domestic financing.

Investing in viral hepatitis prevention, testing and treatment services has tremendous potential to reduce global deaths -- and can increase healthy life expectancy significantly.

For more information on hepatitis, please visit WHO website: [http://www.who.int/hepatitis/en/](http://www.who.int/hepatitis/en/)

**Invest in eliminating hepatitis**