

Finding the Missing Millions: Hepatitis screening in high risk population groups in Pakistan

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Background & Objectives

Globally, 291 million people are living with HBV and 71 million are living with HCV. Only 10% of HBV and 20% of HCV cases are diagnosed. To achieve the targets in Global Health Sector Strategy on Viral Hepatitis, there is dire need to speed up the hepatitis diagnosis and finding the missing millions living with Viral Hepatitis.

Figures: Hepatitis Screening in Refugees, Pregnant Women & Homeless people



Conclusion

Hepatitis elimination in Pakistan needs big investments from the government. Pakistan has the second highest burden of HCV in the world, there is dire need to speed up Hepatitis screening and find the missing millions living with Hepatitis.

Methods

World Hepatitis Alliance has initiated the “Find the Missing Millions” movement to speed up the Hepatitis Screening around the globe. We are conducting hepatitis awareness and screening drives in different high risk population groups of Pakistan. We included Thalassemia positive patients, People Who Inject Drugs, pregnant women, and refugees in the study.

Figure: Hepatitis Screening in People Who Inject Drugs



Results

Out of 262 β Thalassemia patients, the prevalence of HBV and HCV were found 3.08% and 55.73% respectively. All the patients older than 20 years of age were found HCV positive. In people who inject drugs, the prevalence of HCV was found 72% and HIV was found 17%. The HCV/HIV co-infection was found in 12% of PWIDs. In Hepatitis screening camp conducted at slums of Rawalpindi city, we screened 153 pregnant women and found 3.26% & 16.99% were HBV and HCV positive respectively. We are also conducting hepatitis screening in the different refugee camps in Muzaffarabad region, where people displaced from Kashmir lives since 1989. The prevalence of hepatitis is also found high in the refugee population.