

PROGRESS TOWARDS HEPATITIS ELIMINATION IN MONGOLIA: INITIAL OUTCOMES OF THE HEALTHY LIVER NATIONAL PROGRAM 2017-2020

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Background:

Mongolia has a high prevalence of hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV), and hepatitis D (HDV), an estimated 20% of adults live with one or more of these conditions. Mongolia has the world's highest rate of liver cancer mortality, with causality estimated in 2016 as HBV 50%, HCV 27%, and HBV/HCV co-infection 21%. The Mongolian Government identifies viral hepatitis as a top public health priority.

Analysis argument:

In May 2017 the Mongolian Government launched the Healthy Liver (HL) National Program with the aim to eliminate new HCV infections by 2020 and reduce liver-related mortality by improving early detection and treatment while eliminating new infections. For HCV treatment, prices for direct acting antivirals range from 85USD per month (p/m) (generics) to 306USD p/m (originator). National health insurance subsidizes these costs by 86USD p/m. After subsidy, tenofovir for HBV costs approximately 9USD/month. HBV and HCV rapid tests and HCV viral load are covered by health insurance. Average monthly household income in Mongolia is 950,032 MNT (338USD).

Outcomes:

In 2017 the HL started by screening 40-65 year olds, 598,159 (79.7%) with social insurance were eligible. By December 2017 more than 353,445/598,159 (59%) had been tested for HBsAg(8.9% positive) and anti-HCV (16% positive). 20,288 individuals had initiated HCV DAAs, and 53,000 people had initiated HBV vaccination. By 2017, approximately 15,549 people had received HBV antiviral treatment that was covered by their health insurance.

Conclusion:

Mongolia, a lower-middle income country, has made considerable progress in addressing the high burden of viral hepatitis (particularly HCV) nationally. It provides a strong example of government, civil society, patients associations and NGOs collaborating to combat viral hepatitis in a high burden country. A strong example to assist 'no country is left behind' in the drive towards global elimination of viral hepatitis.

Disclosure of Interest Statement

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