

22 MARCH 2017

MEP FRIENDS OF THE LIVER



MEP LiverGroup
in the European Parliament

#LIVERFRIENDS
@MEPLiverGroup

**THE CHALLENGE OF HEPATITIS C IN
CENTRAL AND SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE.**

press

Printed by the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)
Transparency register number 18941013532-08

EPHA (AISBL) is the European Platform bringing together public health organisations representing health professionals, patients groups, health promotion and disease specific NGOs, academic groupings and other health associations. This publication arises from the European Public Health Alliance which has received funding from the European Union, in the framework of the Health Programme. Sole responsibility for this publication lies with EPHA and the Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.



Quotes

- People who inject drugs (PWID) are one of the main HCV-positive and HCV transmission risk group in Europe. Prevalence among PWID in most studies is between 40% and 80%. Reducing the HCV burden in Europe in the future therefore depends on implementing policies that increase the availability of interventions to prevent and treat HCV among PWID.
- Besides the high rates of HCV prevalence among current injectors, there also is a potentially large population of chronic, asymptomatic ex-injectors who will develop HCV-related morbidity in the future and should be included in health care estimates.
- New treatments are as relevant and effective with active PWID as with other populations, active drug use no longer an excluding criteria.
- Modelling suggests that in countries with already established levels of HCV among PWID (such as many in Europe) strategies to reduce HCV prevalence and incidence through treatment and prevention should be based both on upscaling harm-reduction programmes and increasing access to HCV treatment
- Meeting the HCV challenge means strengthening both prevention (harm-reduction) and HCV treatment, especially among PWID.

- Dr Dagmar Hedrich, Head of the Health Consequences and Responses sector at the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)

Quotes

Patients are being let down twice - firstly by dramatic cuts to prevention and public health programmes across Europe, and secondly by the high prices which stand in the way of accessing treatment. An unaffordable treatment is as good as a non-existent one from a patient's perspective.

- Yannis Natsis, Policy Manager Universal Access and Affordable Medicines, European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

The European Liver Patients Association (ELPA) recently launched the Hep-CORE Report to assess national responses to viral hepatitis in the region, collecting a dataset. The data suggest that some European countries are falling short in terms of the policies and practices that public health experts and the World Health Organization recommend as the basis for an effective response to the hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) epidemics. At the moment Hep-CORE is the only survey in the European Union that addresses the government response to hepatitis B and C in 27 different countries. It was initiated by patients, executed by experts and it is monitored by national patient organizations.

It is completely unacceptable that hepatitis continues to be so poorly addressed in Europe. There are excellent prevention and treatment possibilities, well-thought-out strategies are available, and we have numerous international initiatives, especially from WHO," said Tatjana Reic, President of ELPA. "I expect the Hep-CORE study to change the landscape of viral hepatitis policy surveillance on a regional, and even global, level.

- Tatjana Reic, President, European Liver Patients Association (ELPA)