



## Working for a #hepfreefuture by 2030

Viral hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver, commonly caused by viral infection. There are five types of **viral hepatitis: A, B, C, D & 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.

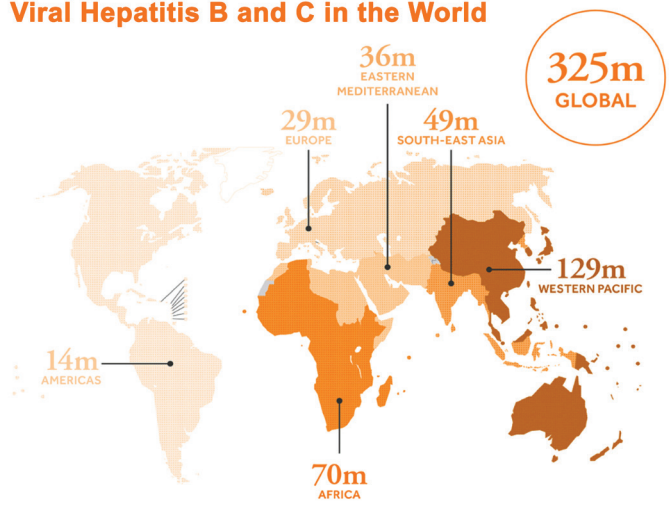
Viral hepatitis B can be prevented by vaccination. Viral hepatitis C can be cured. It is important to continue essential services for viral hepatitis within the context of the current Covid19 pandemic. It is vital to ensure uninterrupted hepatitis B vaccination programmes -- and to scale up hepatitis B and C testing and treatment services.

Hepatitis-free  
future



## Global burden of viral hepatitis

### Viral Hepatitis B and C in the World



- Viral hepatitis B and C affect an estimated 325 million people worldwide, causing about 1.4 million deaths a year.
- Globally, among infectious diseases, it is second only to tuberculosis.
- It is estimated, in 2017, 1.1 million people worldwide were newly infected and developed chronic hepatitis B infection.
- Furthermore, approximately 1.75 million people developed chronic hepatitis C infection globally.

source: [https://www.who.int/hepatitis/news-events/WHO\\_Global-Hepatitis-Infographic-1.gif?ua=1](https://www.who.int/hepatitis/news-events/WHO_Global-Hepatitis-Infographic-1.gif?ua=1)

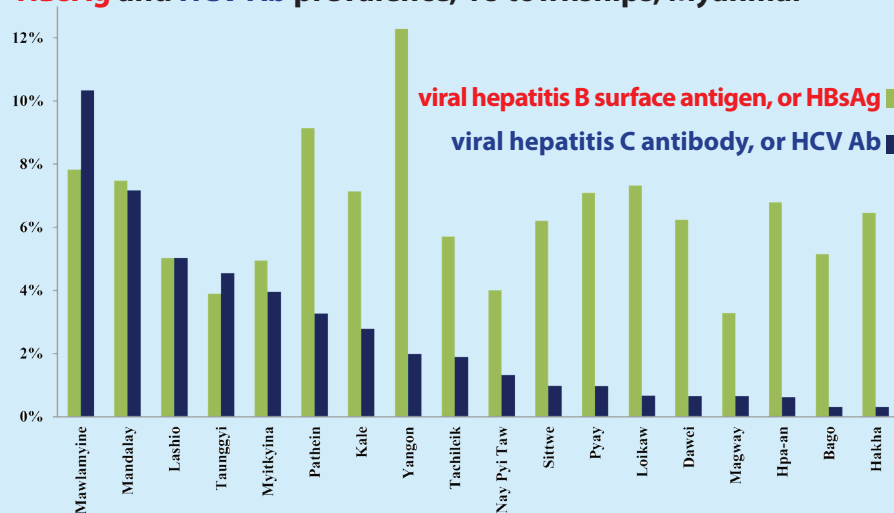
## Viral hepatitis burden in Myanmar

Myanmar is endemic for viral hepatitis. It is one of 28 priority countries for viral hepatitis prevention and control globally.

As shown in the adjacent graph, Myanmar studied how common viral hepatitis B and C are in the country. This is done by detecting hepatitis B surface antigen and hepatitis C antibody in the blood, using 18 selected townships in different parts of the country as study sites.

The data observed were used to calculate the estimated burden in Myanmar. 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 disease.

### HBsAg and HCV Ab prevalence, 18 townships, Myanmar



source: National Hepatitis Control Programme, Ministry of Health and Sports, Myanmar, 2016.



## Viral hepatitis B is preventable

Viral hepatitis **B** vaccination provides lifelong protection. For example, mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis **B** can be prevented by vaccination within 24 hours of birth. In addition, for mothers with high viral load, provision of antiviral therapy during pregnancy can prevent transmission of viral hepatitis B to the baby.

In Myanmar, the expanded programme for immunization is working closely with the national hepatitis control programme to provide immunization for hepatitis **B**, such as birth-dose and childhood vaccinations nationwide. In 2019, coverage of viral hepatitis **B** birth-dose vaccination was 14%, while childhood vaccination coverage was reported to be 91%.

## Viral hepatitis C is curable

Antiviral medicines can cure more than 95% of persons with hepatitis **C** infection, within 12-24 weeks of treatment duration. This contributes to reducing the risk of death from cirrhosis or liver cancer.

### Public sector hepatitis C treatment programme in Myanmar

Myanmar's hepatitis control programme is providing, free-of-charge, viral hepatitis **C** treatment at now 12 public hospitals in 8 different states and regions. Since inception in June 2017 to date, 8,200 patients have received viral hepatitis **C** treatment. Importantly, after 12 weeks of treatment, 90-92% of patients had undetectable levels of hepatitis **C** virus.

### Designated hospitals for public sector hepatitis C treatment programme

no.	hospitals	viral hepatitis treatment available since
1	Yangon Specialty Hospital, Yangon Region	June 2017
2	North Okkalapa Teaching Hospital, Yangon Region	June 2017
3	Mandalay General Hospital, Mandalay Region	June 2017
4	Naypyitaw 1000-bedded Hospital, Naypyitaw	June 2017
5	Specialist Hospital, Mingalardon, Yangon Region	June 2017
6	Specialist Hospital, Waibargi, Yangon Region	June 2017
7	Tharketa 100-bedded Hospital, Yangon Region	June 2017
8	Mawlamyine General Hospital, Mon State	August 2018
9	Myitkyina General Hospital, Kachin State	August 2018
10	Magway Regional Hospital, Magway Region	August 2019
11	Lashio General Hospital, Northern Shan State	October 2019
12	Sao San Htun General Hospital, Southern Shan State	July 2020

Still, gaps remain in several core interventions: prevention of mother to child transmission; testing and treatment for hepatitis B and C; coverage of harm reduction for people who inject drugs. Addressing these gaps will be crucial to reduce mortality and morbidity from viral hepatitis.

## Looking forward to a #hepfreefuture by 2030

For more information on hepatitis, please visit WHO website: <http://www.who.int/hepatitis/en/>

WHO Myanmar newsletter special for World Hepatitis Day 28 July 2020

### Preventing viral hepatitis B & C

- obtain viral hepatitis B vaccination
- never share needles or razors
- practice safe sex
- handle and dispose sharps properly
- accept blood donations from tested sources only

### Viral hepatitis A & E

- the risk of viral hepatitis A & E infection is often associated with lack of safe water, poor sanitation and hygiene
- improved sanitation, food safety and personal hygiene are most effective ways to combat viral hepatitis A & E, as well.

## Viral hepatitis in the time of Covid19

The global Covid19 pandemic is posing a major challenge to continuity of essential health services everywhere, including immunization and continuous treatment services.

It is essential to leave no one behind. It remains important to expand access to testing and treatment, especially for vulnerable people who may be underserved, for example prison inmates or people who use drugs.

Myanmar's national hepatitis control programme is continuing the public sector hepatitis C treatment programme even in this pandemic situation.

Do visit our website:  
<https://bit.ly/3fQWrbd>

