

GLOBAL ACCESS TO HEPATITIS DRUGS AND DIAGNOSTICS

**CONSULTATION WITH PHARMACEUTICAL AND
DIAGNOSTICS COMPANIES**

16 June 2014, Geneva, Switzerland

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MEETING REPORT

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANRS	Agence Nationale de Recherche sur le SIDA et les Hépatites Virales
Global Fund	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
LIC	low-income countries
LMIC	low- and middle-income countries
MIC	middle-income countries
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
PCR	polymerase chain reaction
WHO	World Health Organization

BACKGROUND

The World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Hepatitis Programme organized a one-day meeting with pharmaceutical and diagnostics companies that produce or have a significant development pipeline of drugs for hepatitis treatment, or laboratory tests for the diagnosis and monitoring of hepatitis. This meeting was organized as a part of the Programme's outreach to stakeholders who are active in the area of hepatitis.

The consultation was held on 16 June 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland, and gathered 45 participants from the innovator and generic drug industry, producers of diagnostic tests, professionals from partner organizations, representatives from missions to the United Nations based in Geneva and nongovernmental organizations.

The objectives of the meeting were as follows:

- to present the policy environment in which WHO's Global Hepatitis Programme is developing;
- to present the WHO 2014 recommendations on the screening, care and treatment of hepatitis C, recent technical developments, and inform participants of anticipated future developments;
- to present options for WHO's engagement as part of a global strategy to tackle viral hepatitis, including which outputs it will and may produce in the near future;
- to present and discuss options and assumptions on which to base a feasible approach to secure sustainable universal access to the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of viral hepatitis.

This report summarizes the main points discussed after the presentations at the meeting. The report and presentations are available at: <http://www.who.int/hiv/topics/hepatitis/en/>

OPENING SESSION

Dr Hiroki Nakatani (Assistant Director-General, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases, WHO) and Cornelis De Joncheere (Director, Department of Essential Medicines and Health Products, WHO) gave the opening address. They highlighted the increased commitment of WHO to the hepatitis agenda, and reflected on recent institutional changes in the Organization, with the Global Hepatitis Programme joining the Department of HIV/AIDS. This will enable WHO to play a stronger role in hepatitis. They also elaborated on the role of different departments and offices that support the fight against hepatitis.

SESSION 1. ENHANCED ENGAGEMENT FOR GLOBAL HEPATITIS PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

This session began with a presentation by Gottfried Hirnschall (Director, Department of HIV/AIDS, WHO). It provided the context for the Global Hepatitis Programme. The recent 2014 World Health Assembly resolution WHA67.6 mandates that WHO provide technical support to Member States to develop national hepatitis strategies, improve surveillance, and work with key stakeholders to facilitate equitable access to quality treatment.¹ It urges countries to develop activities for viral hepatitis control along four axes (partnership development and resource mobilization; data, policy and action; prevention of virus transmission; and screening and treatment). It also highlights the fact that the global response to the burden of viral hepatitis is lacking in a number of areas, due to lack of awareness of the magnitude of the problem, good data, funding, and access to prevention and treatment. Dr Hirnschall also gave examples of lessons that could be learned from the global scale up of HIV treatment. These include the strong voice of the community, global movement with multistakeholder engagement, strong government commitment, strategies to promote affordable and equitable access to treatment with simplified guidance, using a public health approach, and achieving major drug price reduction.

DISCUSSION

WHO budget

A representative from Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) asked whether WHO's budget for viral hepatitis has now increased. The response was that it had, but not enough.

A representative from Merck and Co. asked what percentage of the hepatitis budget is covered by WHO, and which Member States contribute to it. Dr Hirnschall (WHO) responded that for hepatitis, WHO's budget is made up of extrabudgetary contributions. WHO has a budget gap for the 2014–2015 budget in many areas and will need to fill these gaps. While most of the work on hepatitis is unfunded currently, WHO hopes to obtain funding from Member States and organizations championing the cause of hepatitis.

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