

Call for Hope: Egypt Free of Hepatitis C

This large-scale national initiative to treat Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)-infected people was determined to be practical and controllable. The decision to treat all stages of fibrosis and remove the requirement of a strict fibrosis assessment enabled the treatment program to be scaled up due to the availability of more medications, increased affordability through allocating more resources and decreasing costs, and the decision to treat all stages of fibrosis (1). Despite the fact that the MoHP has set multiple dates for Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) elimination, we can still see that Egypt will achieve Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) elimination ahead of the 2030 deadline for the following reasons: the Egyptian president's and government's strong political support has made all necessary resources available; the MoHP's commitment to completing this task in collaboration with all other stakeholders; and the presence of coordinated health civil society organizations working to eradicate Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) (2). Around 1.8 million cases have been effectively treated since the Egyptian program began employing Direct Antiviral Agents (DAAs) in 2014, primarily using locally produced effective generic drugs. The government financing program covered the cost of therapy in all cases and encouraged more people to enroll (3). As a result, despite the high frequency of hepatitis as an old and long-standing disease in Egypt, the health profession is well-trained to manage such illnesses, relying on skilled healthcare personnel who have dealt with liver disorders for decades and expanding on their capacities (4).

Egypt has set an ambitious aim of eliminating hepatitis, which is led by the Egyptian president's clear political vision (5). Starting on October 1, 2018, the country plans to screen 45 million citizens in a year, adhering to WHO core testing standards of consent, confidentiality, counseling, correct results, and connection to treatment for all people who test positive. The goal is to treat all cases discovered throughout the screening (6). Meanwhile, international partners such as the World Health Organization (WHO), USAID, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the World Bank collaborate closely with Egypt's government to support the ambitious aim of eliminating Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) on a technical and financial level. To reach such a goal, national capacities in managing massive data influxes must be built (7). The first global health sector plan on viral hepatitis was endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2016, and it helps to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (8). Egypt is working as a pioneering country to eliminate hepatitis through real political leadership, and there are ongoing actions to adopt the necessary strategic directions to meet global goals, such as eliminating hepatitis by 2023. As a result, WHO is collaborating closely with Egypt's government to achieve this aim (9). "We have a historic chance to create transformational improvements in world health," said WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. Let us work together to make universal health coverage a reality for a larger number of people." (10).

Ethical Approval:

As per international standard or university standard ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the authors.

References

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