

# HEPATITIS

## Editorial

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*The month of April on its 28th Day in 2018, saw the celebration of World Hepatitis Day. This health day celebrated annually, came about after a resolution at the 63rd World Health Assembly in May 2010 where a global endorsement that the awareness on hepatitis is raised at national and international levels was given.*

Hepatitis, which is the inflammatory condition of the liver, is caused by various elements including viruses, drugs, toxins and alcohol among other, with viruses being the major cause. Hepatitis caused by viral infections is categorized as hepatitis A, B, C, D and E caused by different viruses. The most common and of greater public health concern are hepatitis B and C. According to the WHO, about 350 million people in the global village are living with chronic hepatitis B or C causing cancer and leading to 1.34 million deaths per annum [1].

World Hepatitis Day aims to create global awareness on causes and solutions to hepatitis infection. This year the following facts were shared by the WHO:

- *Viral hepatitis B and C are major health challenges*
- *Viral hepatitis B and C are root causes of liver cancer*
- *Timely testing and treatment of viral hepatitis B and C can save lives*
- *Viral hepatitis causes debilitating diseases and also places a huge economic burden on families*

- *Viral hepatitis has become a major killer due to a lack of global attention*
- *Over the past 15 years, more and more people have been dying of viral hepatitis*
- *At the same time, people are becoming newly infected with hepatitis*
- *Hepatitis attacks the most vulnerable*
- *You can help eliminate hepatitis*

The WHO this year emphasised and encouraged all to get TESTED, TREATED and CURED (TTC) against hepatitis. With active TTC, the over 90% infections due to Mother to Child and early childhood infections could be prevented. It has been observed that more than 60% of liver cancers caused by hepatitis B and C could have been resolved if treated timely. Among the most vulnerable in relation to hepatitis B and C are children born to infected women, drug abusers, sexually active persons engaged in unprotected sex, men having sex with men, persons who get tattoos and health workers [1].

The CDC reports that risk for chronic infection is related to age at infection and that approximately 90% of infected infants become chronically infected, compared with 2%–6% of adults. This situation could be prevented with vaccination [2]. The CDC has implemented in the United States and encourages other countries to increase

viral hepatitis surveillance, improve access to prevention interventions, clinical care, and treatments as a way of controlling and preventing hepatitis [3].

Africa carries the larger proportion of morbidity and mortality due to hepatitis B virus [4], and Zambia has not been spared in the scourge of hepatitis infections and the complications resulting, more so among HIV infected persons according to Kapambwe et. al (2011) [2].

Globally, there are efforts to eliminate hepatitis as emphasised in the Global Hepatitis Health Sector Strategy that is aiming for “elimination of viral hepatitis as a public health threat” by 2030 [5]. Along this 2030 global goal, enhanced elimination efforts for hepatitis are being promoted under the broader remit of global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) [6].

The Health Press Zambia (THP-Z) reiterates and echoes the call by WHO that to prevent further spread and complications of hepatitis, we must all get Tested, and if infected, Treated and Cured. THP-Z also encourages the public to get vaccinated to control and prevent hepatitis infections. Get TTC is our call too!

# LIST OF REFERENCES

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