Global Health Officials Seek Increase in Hep C Treatment

An estimated 71 million people are living with the virus around the world.

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A new report by the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that the number of people receiving hepatitis C virus (HCV) treatment around the world increased from around 1 million in 2015 to 1.5 million in 2016.

However, global health officials are still urging nations to scale up their fight against the virus and argue that global access to cures remains uneven.

Titled “Progress Report on Access to Hepatitis C Treatment: Focus on Overcoming Barriers in Low- and Middle-Income Countries,” the report reviews the progress made in ramping up access to treatment in 23 such countries around the world.

The update shows that Egypt and Pakistan accounted for about half of people who started hep C treatment in 2016. Australia, Brazil, China, France, Georgia, Mongolia, Morocco, Rwanda and Spain have also made progress in the fight against the global HCV epidemic.

The WHO report also provides information from innovator and generic drug manufacturers and multiple health organizations working in the field of hepatitis.

It underlines the importance of government leadership around the world in scaling up treatment, especially in low- and middle-income nations, which account for nearly 38 percent of all people with a chronic HCV infection. The report also argues that more countries need to procure generic cures for their populations in order to achieve WHO’s 2030 target for hepatitis elimination.

It is currently estimated that 71 million people worldwide are living with hep C—and all need treatment.

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