Only a Few High-Income Nations Poised to Hit WHO's Hep C Elimination Targets

The World Health Organization has set various benchmarks for nations to hit in controlling their epidemics by 2030.

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The vast majority of high-income nations, including the United States, are not likely to hit the World Health Organization's (WHO) various benchmarks for controlling their hepatitis C virus (HCV) epidemics by 2030.

WHO has called upon nations to achieve by 2030 a 90 percent reduction in their annual rate of new chronic HCV and hepatitis B virus infections and a 65 percent reduction in related deaths, and to get 80 percent of the eligible hep C population on treatment for the virus. Hitting these targets was defined as eliminating the virus as a public health threat.

Presenting their findings at the 53rd International Liver Congress in Vienna, researchers used mathematical modeling to predict the trajectories of the hep C epidemics in 45 high-income nations based on current trends.

The model predicted that nine nations are on track toward HCV elimination by 2030: Australia, France, Iceland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Three additional nations would hit all four targets by 2040, including Austria, Germany and Malta, while another three countries would do so by 2050, including Ireland, the Netherlands and Saudi Arabia.

The United States is among those nations not expected to eliminate HCV by 2050.

By 2030, 34 nations would fail to hit the target for new HCV infections, 30 would fail to hit the liver-related death target, 20 would fail to hit the new diagnoses target and 26 would fail to hit the HCV treatment target.

Researchers called for immediate action to increase HCV diagnosis and treatment rates in high-income nations.

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