Interactive HepVu Site Maps U.S. Hepatitis C Hot Spots

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A new website run by Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health maps where in the United States people with the hepatitis C virus (HCV) live and shows which regions of the country have the highest prevalence, rates and number of deaths related to the liver virus, Business Insider reports.

Called HepVu, the site is operated by the same group responsible for AIDSvu, a similar project that has tracked HIV rates across the country since 2010. HepVu researchers say this is the first time state-by-state estimates on hepatitis C have been featured in an interactive online format.

The project, which uses HCV prevalence data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and was conducted in partnership with California-based pharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences, was designed to help doctors, patients, politicians and hepatitis C researchers better understand the ongoing epidemic.

A series of maps, based on CDC hepatitis C prevalence data from 2010, show the regions of the country most affected by the virus (there are an estimated 3.9 million Americans with past or current infections). States shown in dark orange have the highest number of people living with hepatitis C; states shown in lighter orange have a lower prevalence.

HepVu also looks at the number of hepatitis C cases per 100,000 people in each state to get a clearer picture of HCV rates across the country. Researchers noted that many parts of the South (e.g., Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas) appear to be disproportionately affected by the epidemic compared with the Midwest and Northeast.

The report also breaks down details by state, estimating HCV antibody prevalence, hepatitis C mortality rates (taken from 2014 estimates) and state-specific population profiles of those most likely to be affected by the epidemic. Researchers say they hope people will use the map to determine whether they should get tested and are recommending that all baby boomers and injection drug users get checked out for the virus.

HepVu researchers say they hope the site will also help politicians and hepatitis C advocates across the country know where to deploy public health efforts on a state level to cut back the number of deaths and new infections related to the virus.

Click here to take a full tour of the site, which includes maps, state profiles, hepatitis basics and a number of other HCV-related resources.

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