



# Scientists Warn: Up to 90% of People With Hepatitis B Don't Know They Have It

A new study by the Lancet says testing shortfalls have left 270 million people undiagnosed and untreated.

April 6, 2018 By [Casey Halter](#)

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A new study in the Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology Journal suggests that up to 90 percent of people living with hepatitis B virus (HBV) worldwide are unaware of their infection — a startling statistic for a preventable and treatable condition, [The Guardian reports](#).

Led by scientists at the Center for Disease Analysis Foundation, a public health research firm based in Colorado, the study estimates that nearly 300 million people are living with hepatitis B around the world. Of those, 270 million people remain both undiagnosed and untreated. Unlike hepatitis C virus (HCV) and hepatitis A virus (HAV), hepatitis B is incurable but can be managed with treatment. The virus can also be prevented with a vaccine series that provides lifelong immunity, but researchers found that only half of all babies globally receive it.

The study also found that less than 1 percent of mothers living with hepatitis B (the primary source of global transmissions) receive appropriate treatment. Researchers warn that the World Health Organization goal of eradicating HBV globally by 2030 is unlikely to be met unless countries rapidly improve access to testing and treatment over the next few years.

“We have all the tools necessary to eliminate HBV. Our estimates highlight an enormous opportunity for effective screening, diagnosis and treatment to substantially reduce the numbers of new infections by 2030,” said primary investigator Homie Razavi, PhD. “But we must accelerate efforts across the board.”

Current estimates show that the virus is most prevalent in East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. China, Indonesia, Nigeria and the Philippines account for nearly 57 percent of all global cases. Meanwhile, studies also show that two thirds of people living with hepatitis B in the United States are unaware of their infection.

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