Stopping Hep B and Hep C Globally by 2030

A new report says progress has been made in prevention, but global screening and treatment programs still lag.

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Scientists at the Task Force for Global Health presented a new assessment of global progress toward the World Health Organization (WHO) goal of eliminating hepatitis C virus (HCV) and hepatitis B virus (HBV) worldwide by 2030.

Their conclusion? It's definitely possible, but it will take a lot of work and money. The report zeroed in on how likely global health efforts are to meet WHO's goal of achieving a 90% reduction in new chronic hep cases and a 65% reduction in related deaths.

There has been progress. For example, the three-dose series of the HBV vaccine has been more than 95% effective in preventing infections and protecting against chronic infection for over 30 years. However, in 2015, only 39% of newborns globally received the vaccine.

The report also cites data showing that people who inject drugs reduce their risk of HCV transmission by 74% with adequate access to opioid substitution therapy. However, 89% of them cannot currently obtain this kind of treatment for their addiction, and harm reduction services are generally in short supply around the world.

Screening and treatment programs are also lagging, the study says. Today, only 9% of people living with hep B around the world have been diagnosed, and only 8% of those diagnosed have received treatment.

The report also cited an estimate that of the 71 million people living with hep C, only 14 million, or 20%, have been diagnosed, and just 7% have received treatment.

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