Hepatitis C in Nigeria

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Hepatitis C in Africa

The continent of Africa has a population of about 1 billion people. It is likely that this population has the highest Hepatitis C infection levels in the world. Research figures are scarce but some research suggests that at least one in every 25 people in Africa may have Hep C.

However exact Hep C infection rates are hard to find.

If we use figures from Hepatitis C research in Nigeria and assume a similar rate of infection across all of Africa it is possible that there may be as many as 50 million people infected with Hepatitis C in Africa.

The Nigerian Medical Journal Research

According to the Nigerian Medical Journal (Vol.51 2010) the prevalence of hepatitis C. virus infection is increasing in Nigeria, ranging from 4.7-5% in Ilorin, to 5.3-6.6% in Enugu, to 11% in Ibadan and 20% in Benin.

In other words, more than 5% of the people tested were infected with HCV.

The Hepatitis C infection rate appears to be highest amongst Nigeria's poor as recent research showed that amongst Nigerian university students the infection rate was around the 1% mark… much lower than the general population.

The Poor Suffer Most

So we have this situation that we find all around the world where the poor cannot afford the medication or the testing.

They have no hope.

To put this in perspective the minimum wage in Nigeria is about US$50 per month.

A viral load test is around $180… or about 4 months wages.

Unlicensed generic Sofosbuvir + Daclatasvir Hepatitis C treatments are available in Nigeria but the price is about US$900 for a 12 week treatment.

(As always, even with generics, the people selling them want to make the maximum profit regardless of human suffering.)

So we have this situation where an average person must pay 4 months wages for the viral load

test and 18 months wages for a 12 week treatment with Sofosbuvir + Daclatasvir.

Clearly both options are impossible. It would be like asking a waitress in Miami to pay $8,000 for the viral load test and $40,000 for the treatment.

Click here to read the rest of this blog, including a story from a young Nigerian woman.

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