

SCREENING AND PREVENTION FOR VIRAL HEPATITIS AND HIV IN CEE

COUNTRY

CROATIA

(Team: Croatian Institute of Public Health, Ministry of Health, NGOs: Flight, CAHIV, Hepatos)

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Analysis of the situation

- **HIV**
 - prevalence in general population is low (< 0,1 %)
 - most affected key population is MSM (prevalence $\hat{=}$ 4%)
- **Hep B & C**
 - Prevalence in general population is low (< 1 %)
 - Prevalence of HCV in PWID: 40-60 %
 - Significantly higher in key populations
- Resources/facilitators:
- continuity (tradition) in epidemiological surveillance (harmonized with the EU regulations), prevention and control, good hep B vaccination coverage in childhood (routine since 1999/2007 newborns, groups in risk), good collaboration health institutions with NGOs - anonymously and free of charge HIV&HCV&HBV testing including testing in outreach and community settings, functional network of public health institutes (experts), knowledge and experience from successful implementation of HIV GF project, global partnership, inclusiveness into ECDC/WHO information system and communication, EU initiatives&projects (Think Tank group of experts and CSF, HA-REACT, INTEGRATE), treatment available and full covered with health insurance funds (universal health coverage)- HIV- 1100 patients in 2017.; 300 HCV patients per year

Challenges

Hep B & C

- Lack of awareness of clinicians and stakeholders
- LAB data not EPI linked
- Improve HBV&HCV surveillance of cases/death (el.notification system not fully implemented; enhanced surveillance for more information about route transmission and other epi variables not fully implemented-in pilot phase since 2017)
- Improve the quality of routinely collected data (testing, hep status of cirrhosis and HCC, deaths...)
- No hep C register
- No national strategy for viral hepatitis exclusively - currently in preparatory phase, draft version
- Lack of finances and human resources
- Changes in health system priorities
- M & E
- Stigma and discrimination

- HIV
- Lack of finances and human resources
- Unequal coverage of prevention activities across all regions/counties
- Changes in health system priorities
- M & E - to inform prevention interventions
- Stigma and discrimination
- PrEP - currently under discussion among experts

Action plans for viral hepatitis

- Resolution on fight against viral hepatitis adopted by Croatian Parliament - 2009
- National Hepatitis Strategy is in its preparatory phase - (working group at MoH established in december 2017) -> dissemination among all stakeholders -> adoption by Government HR

Objectives:

- Raising awareness of general and key populations
- Capacity building of health care workers and all stakeholders
- Improvement of epidemiological surveillance
- Strengthening of priority prevention and control measures (vaccination, testing - early diagnosis and linkage to care - health care and community based settings, direct referral to treatment, harm reduction, decrease of mortality, redefinition of pharmaceutical prices policy...)
- Multidisciplinary and integrated approach
- In line with international and global (WHO, SDGs...) and national strategies and documents