

PRESS RELEASE

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CEVHAP Asia Pacific Hepatitis Policy 2016 Survey finds Asia Pacific on path to eliminating viral hepatitis

- *100% of countries assessed have national working groups to tackle the disease.*
- *66% of countries assessed have or are in the process of adopting national plans to eliminate viral hepatitis.*

Singapore (Thursday, 28 July 2016) – The Coalition to Eradicate Viral Hepatitis in Asia Pacific (CEVHAP) today released the interim findings of its Asia Pacific Hepatitis Policy 2016 Survey conducted in collaboration with the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). Early responses show momentum towards the elimination of viral hepatitis in the region with 10 of the 15 countries surveyed in the Asia Pacific having or in the process of adopting a national plan, and 12 countries reported to have an active working group to address the disease at a national level.

To coincide with World Hepatitis Day, CEVHAP, the first organisation working across Asia Pacific dedicated to reducing the regional burden of viral hepatitis, and CUHK surveyed domestic experts in 15 countries including Australia, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan, Myanmar, Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangladesh, and Japan – China, India and Singapore responses remain to be analysed and therefore have not been included. The survey assessed whether:

- national strategic plans were addressing prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care;
- if surveillance systems were able to monitor numbers of people chronically infected with viral hepatitis; and
- the state of health care infrastructure available for the prevention, diagnosis and clinical management of hepatitis B and C.

Key findings of the CEVHAP Asia Pacific Hepatitis Policy 2016 Survey include:

- 12 countries have an active working group addressing viral hepatitis at a national level;
- 10 countries have or are in the process of developing or adopting a national plan;
- 10 countries recommend birth dose vaccination;
- 6 countries are reported to have made hepatitis B and hepatitis C treatment accessible in all parts of the country, although many people still need to pay out of pocket treatment expenses;
- 6 countries have performed economic evaluations regarding the impact and cost of viral hepatitis;
- 7 governments reported on the number of people living with chronic viral hepatitis;
- 4 governments record the number of people dying as a result of viral hepatitis, liver disease and/or liver cancer each year;

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- Nation-wide access to services from diagnosis to treatment for hepatitis B and hepatitis C continue to be face significant challenges, with only 3 countries ensuring those diagnosed are referred to appropriate information, counselling and care.

“CEVHAP, along with the wider hepatitis community, welcomes the growing commitment to eliminate viral hepatitis across Asia Pacific”, said Prof Ding-Shinn Chen, Chairman of CEVHAP. “The steps taken at national level are good first steps; however, despite strong progress from since similar surveys were carried out by the World Hepatitis Alliance in consultation with the World Health Organization in 2010 and 2013, much remains to be done and governments in the region must continue their commitment to reducing the burden of viral hepatitis.”

“A critical next step is for the national governments that are yet to identify available infrastructure, including health services, treatment access, data, policy support and advisory structures, to do so and identify gaps in order to address them.” added Prof Chen.

The survey confirms that policies and actions seeking to eliminate viral hepatitis across the region are in development at a national level. This builds on regional measures including the Regional Action Plan for Viral Hepatitis in the Western Pacific 2016-2021, approved in October 2015, and the WHO’s South East Asia Region draft action plan released for consultation; the WHO’s Global Health Sector Strategy on Viral Hepatitis 2016-2021 was ratified in May 2016. Nevertheless, there remains a long road and strong need for commitment to eliminate hepatitis in Asia Pacific and beyond.

CEVHAP believes that a collaborative effort, including shared expertise and best practices, will bolster the preventative and remedial momentum required to achieve elimination of viral hepatitis in the region. This World Hepatitis Day 2016, CEVHAP supports the launch of NOhep, a global movement aimed at uniting people from across the world to take action, to speak out and be engaged to ensure viral hepatitis is eliminated by 2030.

The World Hepatitis Alliance together with CEVHAP and a large number of civil society organisations support today’s launch of NOhep to ensure that governments take the necessary steps to meet elimination targets.

The need for strategic, coordinated and integrated responses to viral hepatitis is particularly acute in Asia Pacific given this region experiences the largest number of infections and deaths from viral hepatitis in the world. As a result, CEVHAP calls on individuals and organisations across the region this World Hepatitis Day to sign-up and be part of the next greatest achievement, the elimination of viral hepatitis.

Sign up to NOhep and become a hepatitis activist here: www.NOhep.org.

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NOTES TO THE EDITORS

About CEVHAP

The [Coalition to Eradicate Viral Hepatitis in Asia Pacific \(CEVHAP\)](#) is the first organisation of its kind in the region, established as an independent, multidisciplinary body to advocate for public policy reform to reduce the burden of and ultimately eliminate viral hepatitis in Asia Pacific.

Incorporated in October 2010, CEVHAP membership is comprised of many world-renowned hepatitis experts, including people living with the infections, utilizing the collective expertise of its members to assist the region through partnership with a broad range of stakeholders, including government bodies in public policy formation and health education.

CEVHAP is working closely with the World Health Organization (WHO), having assisted the WHO in launching its landmark Global Hepatitis Network in Singapore in June 2013, as well as having taken part in the WHO Global Partners' Meeting on Hepatitis in March 2014. More recently, CEVHAP has contributed to the development of the Western Pacific Regional Action Plan for Viral Hepatitis. For more information, please visit www.cevhap.org, or follow CEVHAP on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Weibo](#).

About Viral Hepatitis

[Viral hepatitis](#) is inflammation of the liver caused by a virus, and globally kills more than 1.4 million people every year. There are 5 different hepatitis viruses - hepatitis A, B, C, D and E. Hepatitis A is spread mainly through ingestion of contaminated food and water and there are an estimated 1.4 million cases each year. Hepatitis B is transmitted through contact with the blood or other bodily fluids of an infected person and approximately 240 million people are living with chronic infections. Hepatitis C is mainly spread through blood-to-blood contact such as unsafe injection practices and inadequate sterilisation of medical equipment. Hepatitis D is passed on through contact with infected blood and only occurs in people who are already

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infected with hepatitis B. Hepatitis E, like hepatitis A, is transmitted through ingesting contaminated food or water.

About the CEVHAP Asia Pacific Hepatitis Policy 2016 Survey

The [Coalition to Eradicate Viral Hepatitis in Asia Pacific \(CEVHAP\)](#) conducted a policy survey in collaboration with the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The objective of this survey was to gather an update on the status of national hepatitis programmes in the following Asia Pacific countries: Australia, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan, Myanmar, Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangladesh, and Japan. Results were based on telephone interviews with CEVHAP members in the selected countries. The questionnaire developed for said interviews focused on national data availability, health services, treatment access, policy support, advisory structures, and regulatory or cultural barriers including those affecting people living with viral hepatitis. If CEVHAP members in these countries were unable to answer some of the questions, answers were sought from alternative sources including publically available documents, WHO country officers or WHA members.

About World Hepatitis Day

[World Hepatitis Day](#) is 1 of only 4 official disease-specific world health days officially recognised by the [World Health Organization](#). The ninth annual World Hepatitis Day will take place on Tuesday, 28 July 2016, as part of an on-going campaign launched by the World Hepatitis Alliance in 2008. This is the 6th year that CEVHAP has supported World Hepatitis Day in Asia Pacific and also the 6th year that the WHO has endorsed World Hepatitis Day.

For World Hepatitis Day 2016 the World Hepatitis Alliance launched [NOhep](#), a global movement aimed at uniting people from across the world to take action, to speak out and be engaged to ensure viral hepatitis is eliminated by 2030. In addition, NOhep provides a platform for the hepatitis community to share resources and materials so that actions can be taken to eliminate viral hepatitis. The fundamental objective of NOhep is to build awareness of viral hepatitis and the crucial role people can play, in their own lives, at more structural levels and in their communities, to help eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030.

About the World Hepatitis Alliance

The [World Hepatitis Alliance \(WHA\)](#) is a patient-led and patient driven non-governmental organisation (NGO). With over 230 member patient groups from 82 countries, WHA provides global leadership to drive action to help eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030. Their aim is to work with governments, members and other key partners to support and elevate patient voices, to raise the profile of viral hepatitis and to help establish comprehensive hepatitis strategies which have robust prevention measures and access to affordable diagnostics and treatment.

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About NOhep

[NOhep](#) is a global movement aimed at uniting the hepatitis community and beyond to take action, to speak out and be engaged to ensure global commitments are met and viral hepatitis is eliminated by 2030. NOhep's goal is to reach engage over 300 million people by 2030 to accelerate action towards the elimination of viral hepatitis.

What does NOhep do?

- Connects people across the world who have a common goal of eliminating a global killer;
- Lobbies governments and international organisations to make sure they drive action to eliminate viral hepatitis;
- Inspires people and tells powerful stories of the achievements of people living with viral hepatitis;
- Mobilises supporters across the globe to be part of the next greatest achievement;
- Campaigns for a world where people have access to life saving interventions and do not suffer discrimination.

NOhep will act as a platform where tools and materials will be available for supporters to take action. It will also have a section where supporters can engage, share stories, upload content and interact. The overall idea is that NOhep becomes an evolving movement directed by the needs and priorities of the community.

By signing up to the movement, you will stay connected with the hepatitis community, get advocacy support and materials, have a platform to share your activities and have the global backing of a movement to progress your advocacy goals.

Who runs NOhep?

NOhep is an initiative which originated as a response to a strong call from the hepatitis community for a global movement and a campaign which increases recognition of viral hepatitis the red ribbon does for HIV/AIDS. The World Hepatitis Alliance (WHA) is currently acting as the secretariat for NOhep, receiving input from a taskforce comprised of WHA members, an external international campaign agency and civil society organisations. As NOhep evolves, the objective is to have a multi-stakeholder working group made up of a variety of stakeholders and organisations to input, run and propel the global movement, in fact to own it.