

No Hepatitis After 2030

Aloke Kumar Raha^{1*}

¹Department of Hepatology
Chattogram Medical College
Chattogram, Bangladesh.

*Correspondence to:

Dr. Aloke Kumar Raha
Associate Professor
Department of Hepatology
Chattogram Medical College
Chattogram, Bangladesh.
Mobile : +88 01715 30 71 86
Email: alokkumar_ctg@yahoo.com

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What is World Hepatitis Day and Why

Every year, the world hepatitis day is celebrated on 28 July. The day is celebrated in commemoration of the inventor of the Hepatitis-B virus, Noble Laureate Professor Samuel Blumberg on his birthday.

What is Hepatitis

Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver and viral hepatitis is a disease of the liver cause by viruses. It is of two types-short term and long term. Hepatitis A and E are the short term and are water born. On the other hand, Hepatitis B and C are long term and transmit through blood. The virus can persists in body with or without showing any symptoms. Some common symptoms of Hepatitis are jaundice, loss of appetite, weakness, liver pain, flu or fever, body and muscle pain, and vomiting.

Type of Viral Hepatitis

Viral Hepatitis is caused by five viruses-A, B, C, D and E. However, other than D-virus, all the virus infections are found in Bangladesh.

Hepatitis A: Hepatitis A is caused by Hepatitis virus A. It infects the human body through the consumption of polluted water and food. This is the most visible form of infection. In most cases, there are few or no symptoms of infection in the bearer body-especially for the children. However, the adult body may experience multiple symptoms. It takes six weeks to show symptoms after the day of infection. The symptoms can last two to six weeks. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, yellow skin, fever and stomach pain are multiple symptoms of infection. The virus can be prevented through vaccination.

Hepatitis B: Hepatitis B virus causes Hepatitis B. The virus transmits from one body to another through infected blood, syringe, and use of infected instruments during surgery and semen. Sometimes, the infected body does not show any symptoms. However, in some cases the common symptoms are nausea, yellow skin, tiredness, stomach pain and yellow urine. These symptoms last for a couple of weeks. The probability of permanent (Chronic) Hepatitis B infection in the liver in case of infected adult is 5 to 10 percent and for infected neonatal is more than 90 percent. We define them as chronic Hepatitis B patient. Most of the Hepatitis B infected individuals does not experience any problems or show any symptoms until they are develop Liver Cirrhosis or Liver Cancer. There are several medications for the virus, which are available in Bangladesh. Among these medications Pegylated Interferon and Tenofovir Alafenamide are mentionable. The virus can be prevented thorough vaccination to individuals with negative hepatitis B serologies. It is important to administer Hepatitis B vaccine to the child of the infected mother, husband or wife to infected person, health workers, close contacts and other high-risk individuals.

The disease can be prevented by safe blood transfusion, separate use of toothbrush, razor and avoiding multiple sex partners and safe sex.

Hepatitis C: Hepatitis C infection is caused by the hepatitis C virus. The infection spreads when blood contaminated with the virus enters the bloodstream of an uninfected person through injection and syringe. Once infected, the virus usually creates permanent infection in the liver of the infected person. In most cases, the infected person does not show any symptoms of infection. After several decades of infection, the infected person may develop significant liver damage, like Liver Cirrhosis without showing any symptom. This later may turn into liver cancer. People, who are addicted to alcohol, will likely develop liver cirrhosis or liver failure much more quickly. The common symptoms of Hepatitis C infection are weakness, tension, weight loss, jaundice, liver pain, body and muscle pain, nausea or loss of appetite. In recent time, with the discovery of effective medicine, Hepatitis C virus can be cured more than 95 percent cases. It's a matter of great joy that medicines like Sofosbuvir and Velpatasvir are produced in Bangladesh. There are no vaccines for Hepatitis C and therefore, individual and public consciousness are the only way for its prevention. For example, assuring the safe transfusion of blood, restricting multiple use of syringe and practicing safe sex.

Hepatitis D: Hepatitis D virus cause the disease. This virus can affect only people who are Hepatitis B positive. The virus does not exist in Bangladesh. The virus exists only in the Mediterranean countries.

Hepatitis E: Hepatitis E virus causes the disease. It transmits through polluted food and water. It usually does not cause Cirrhosis Cancer like Hepatitis B and C, unless the person has very low immune system. However, the virus is the main reason for liver failure. In case of pregnant mothers and person with liver disease are more vulnerable if affected by Hepatitis E. Until now, there are no vaccination or medicine for Hepatitis E. Therefore, consciousness about the virus, for instance, drinking safe water, hygiene maintenance, safe sanitation practice are required for its prevention.

Hepatitis Outbreak Worldwide and Bangladesh Perspective

An estimated 325 million people are living with Hepatitis worldwide and on an average four thousand people die of Hepatitis every day. It's a matter of great concern that 90% of them do not know that they have Hepatitis. In 80% cases, Hepatitis B and C are the main cause for liver cancer.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), around 10 million people are Hepatitis B and C positive in Bangladesh. In reference to Forum of the Study of Liver, every year 22,500 people die of Hepatitis in Bangladesh. However, it's a matter of joy that Hepatitis outbreak in Bangladesh is decreasing. After the introduction in EPI schedule of vaccine for Hepatitis B virus in 2004, the number of infection has decreased. However, there is no vaccine for Hepatitis C and therefore, public consciousness is the only way to prevent it.

Chattogram Perspective

In mid-2018, there was a Hepatitis E outbreak in Haliashahar of Chattogram. In addition, there was an outbreak of water born Hepatitis A and E virus. Therefore, we must be careful about the issues. In 2009, the government established Hepatology (Liver) Department in Chattogram Medical College Hospital with an objective to treat the liver patient. Liver specialists give treatment to the patients admitted to the hospital.

World Health Organization's Strategic Goals to prevent Hepatitis:

- i) Vaccination of 90% children worldwide by 2030.
- ii) A 90% Reduction of Hepatitis B infection among the children from their mother.
- iii) Reduction of Hepatitis infection in blood (Blood Transfusion) by 100 percent.
- iv) Screening and treatment of Hepatitis B by 90% and Hepatitis C by 80%.

Prevention of Hepatitis and its Cure

Awareness of both the patient and the physician to screen Hepatitis virus and its treatment is required. To cure Hepatitis people should see expert physicians and take their suggestions and avoid fake treatment including Jhar Phuk, using garland and other Kaviraji treatment. Vaccination, safe blood transfusion, and safe sex are must for Hepatitis prevention. Scaling up people's consciousness in both government and non-government level can prevent and cure Hepatitis by 2030 as per the target of World Health Organization.

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