

More Hepatitis C late diagnosis cases,  
an aftermath of the COVID-19  
pandemic in Barcelona, Spain.

Juan Carlos Ruiz Cobo,  
Adriana Palom, Mar Riveiro-Barciela,  
Rafael Esteban, María Buti



October 11-13, 2022 | Barceló Sevilla Renacimiento

**NO8DO**

AYUNTAMIENTO DE SEVILLA

**IATAC**  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF PROVIDERS OF AIDS CARE

 **FAST-TRACK CITIES**  
INSTITUTE

## Background and aims



## World Health Organization

In May 2016, the World Health Assembly endorsed the *Global Health Sector Strategy (GHSS) on viral hepatitis 2016–2021*. The GHSS calls for the elimination of viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030 (reducing new infections by 90% and mortality by 65%).

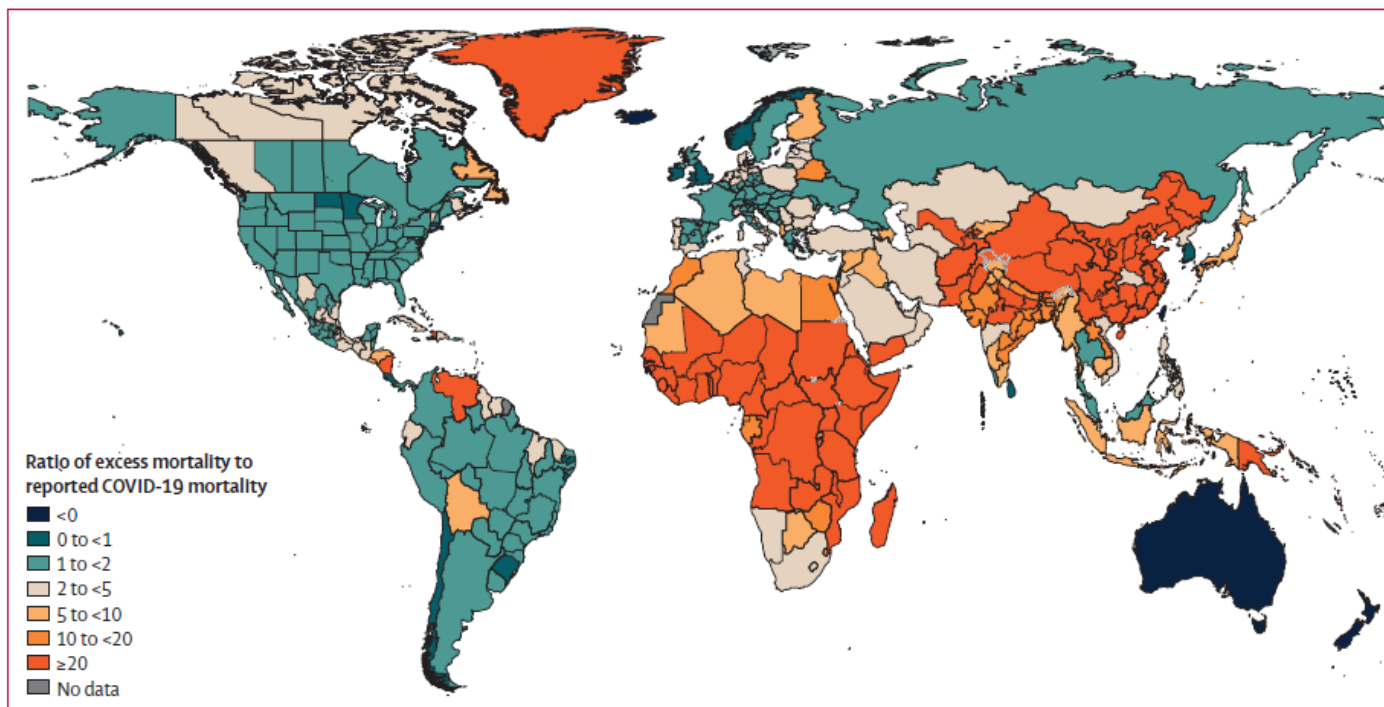
## Background and aims



## Background and aims

### Estimating excess mortality due to the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic analysis of COVID-19-related mortality, 2020–21

*Lancet* 2022; 399: 1513–36



**Figure 4:** Global distribution of the ratio between estimated excess mortality rate due to the COVID-19 pandemic and reported COVID-19 mortality rate, for the cumulative period 2020–21

**Findings** Although reported COVID-19 deaths between Jan 1, 2020, and Dec 31, 2021, totalled 5·94 million worldwide, we estimate that 18·2 million (95% uncertainty interval 17·1–19·6) people died worldwide because of the COVID-19 pandemic (as measured by excess mortality) over that period. The global all-age rate of excess mortality due to the



## Background and aims: epidemiological context before covid19 pandemic

Late presentation of chronic HBV and HCV patients seeking first time specialist care in Spain: a 2-year registry review

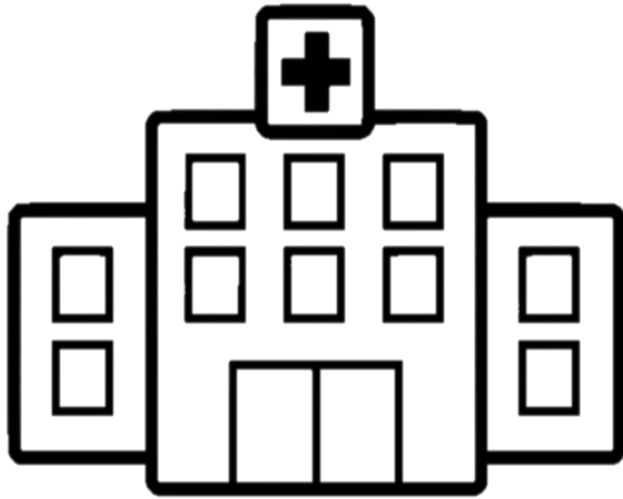
HCV	2018-2019
Patients	1785
Male (%)	63.9
Age, mean (years)	55.9
Spanish-born (%)	87.3
<b>Late presentation (%)</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Late stage disease (%)</b>	<b>5.2</b>
- HCC(%)	2,6
- Descompensated cirrhosis	2,6

## Background and aims

- To evaluate if the pandemic limited the access to first time specialist care for HCV patients.
- To evaluate if the pandemic increased the amount of HCV patients with late presentation.

## Patients and methods

### Vall d'Hebron Hospital (Barcelona)



Retrospective-Prospective  
study performed between  
2018 and 2021.

### Study cohort

- Attending 1<sup>st</sup> hepatology consultation.
- Chronic HCV infection (HCV RNA +).
- Patients > 18 years-old.
- Exclusion of acute hepatitis.

- Patients were referred by a primary care physician or other specialists.
- Demographic and clinical characteristics were separated into three periods:
  - preCOVID (2018-19).
  - COVID Lockdown (2020).
  - COVID (2021).
- Liver fibrosis was assessed by noninvasive methods (**transient elastography** or FIB-4).

## Late presentation

Presentation with advanced liver disease in untreated patients with chronic hepatitis B and C

A patient with chronic hepatitis B or C and significant fibrosis assessed by one of the following: serologic fibrosis score  $\geq$  F3 (assessed by APRI score  $> 1.5$ , FIB-4  $> 3.25$ , Fibrotest  $> 0.59$  or alternatively a transient elastography (FibroScan)  $> 9.5$  kPa) or liver biopsy ( $\geq$  METAVIR stage F3) in patients with no previous antiviral treatment<sup>a</sup>.

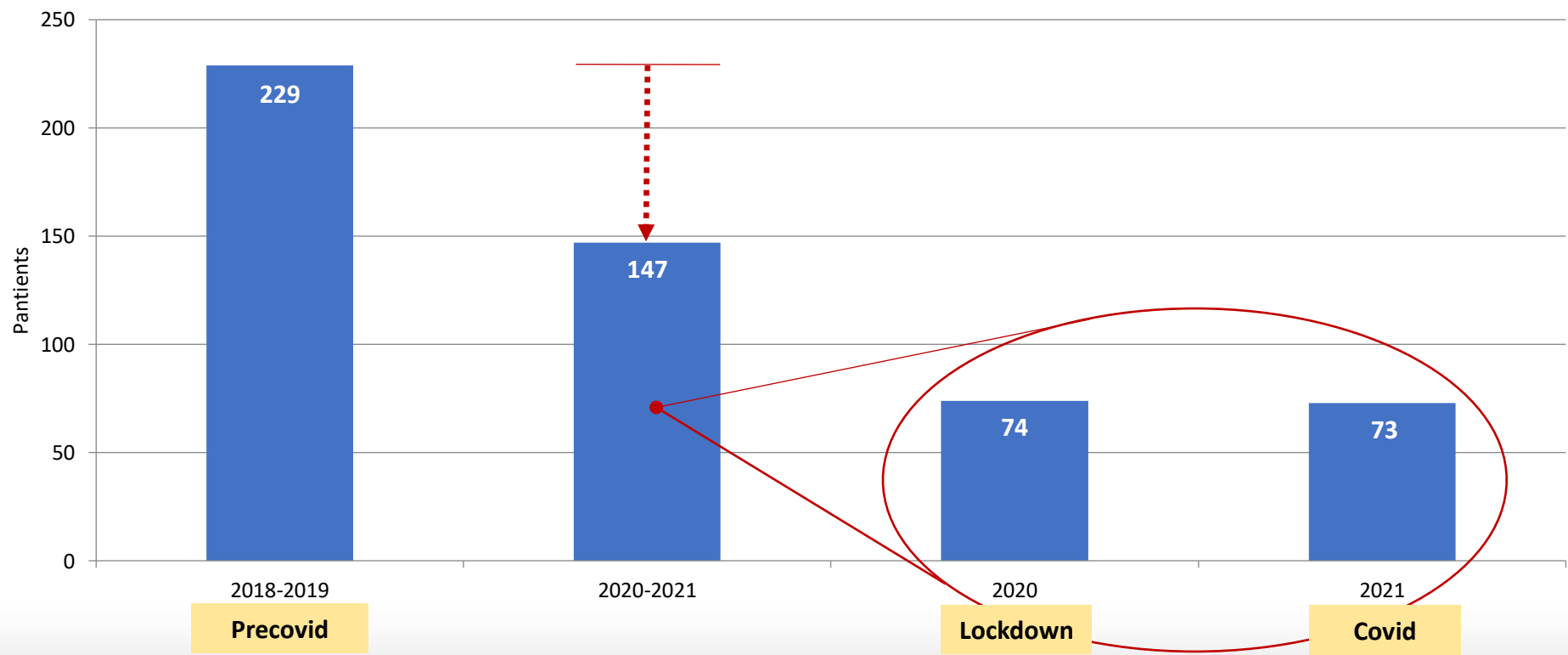
Presentation with late stage liver disease in untreated patients with chronic hepatitis B and C

Presence of at least one symptom of decompensated cirrhosis (jaundice, hepatic encephalopathy, clinically detectable ascites, variceal bleeding) and/or hepatocellular carcinoma in patients with no previous antiviral treatment<sup>b</sup>.



Results: patients attended

A total of 376 patients with Hepatitis C were visited during this period: 229 before and 147 during COVID19 pandemic, **representing a decrease by 36% of patients attended.**

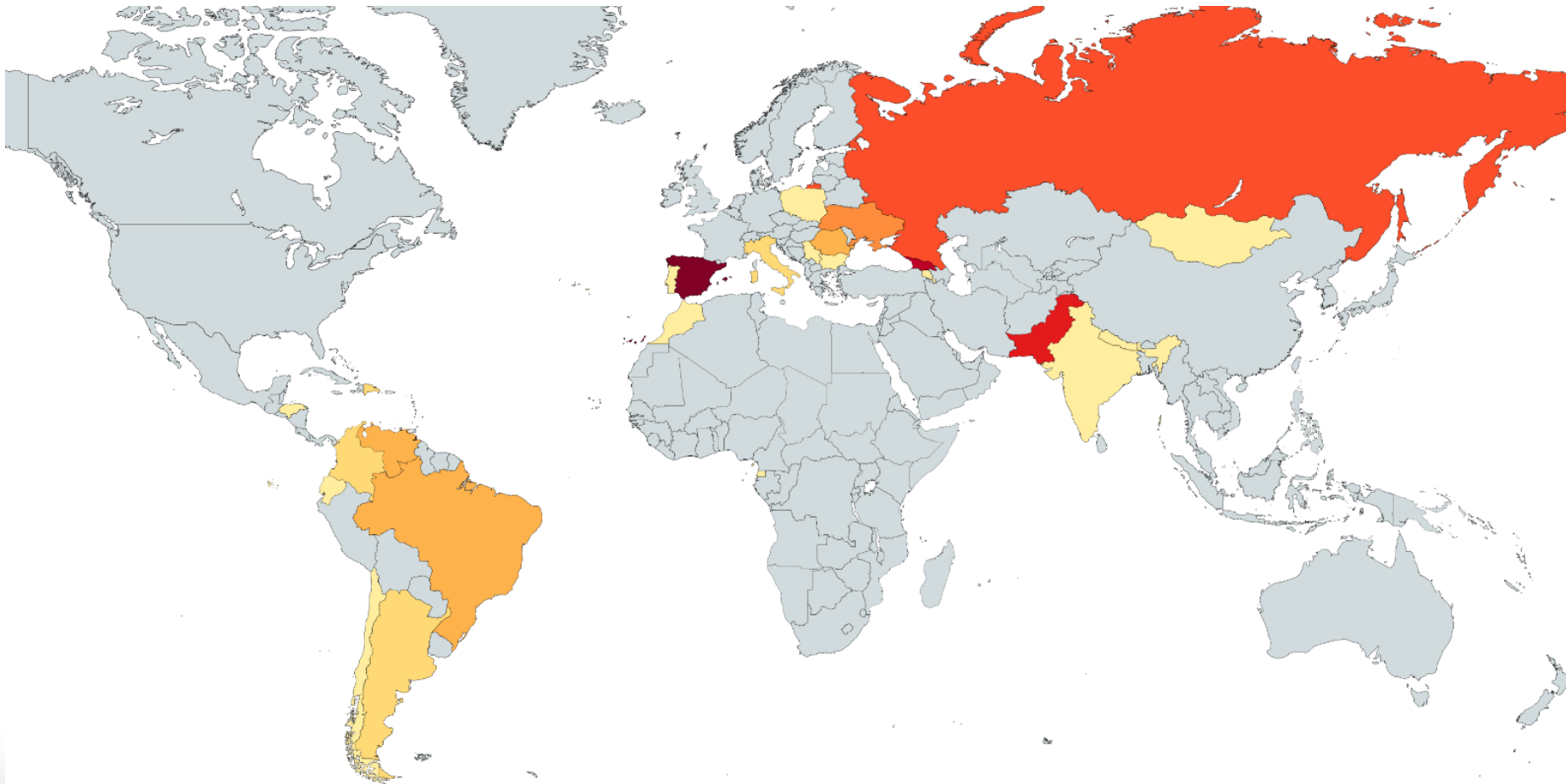


2018-2021

Patients (n)	376
Male (%)	54
Mean Age (years)	57.8

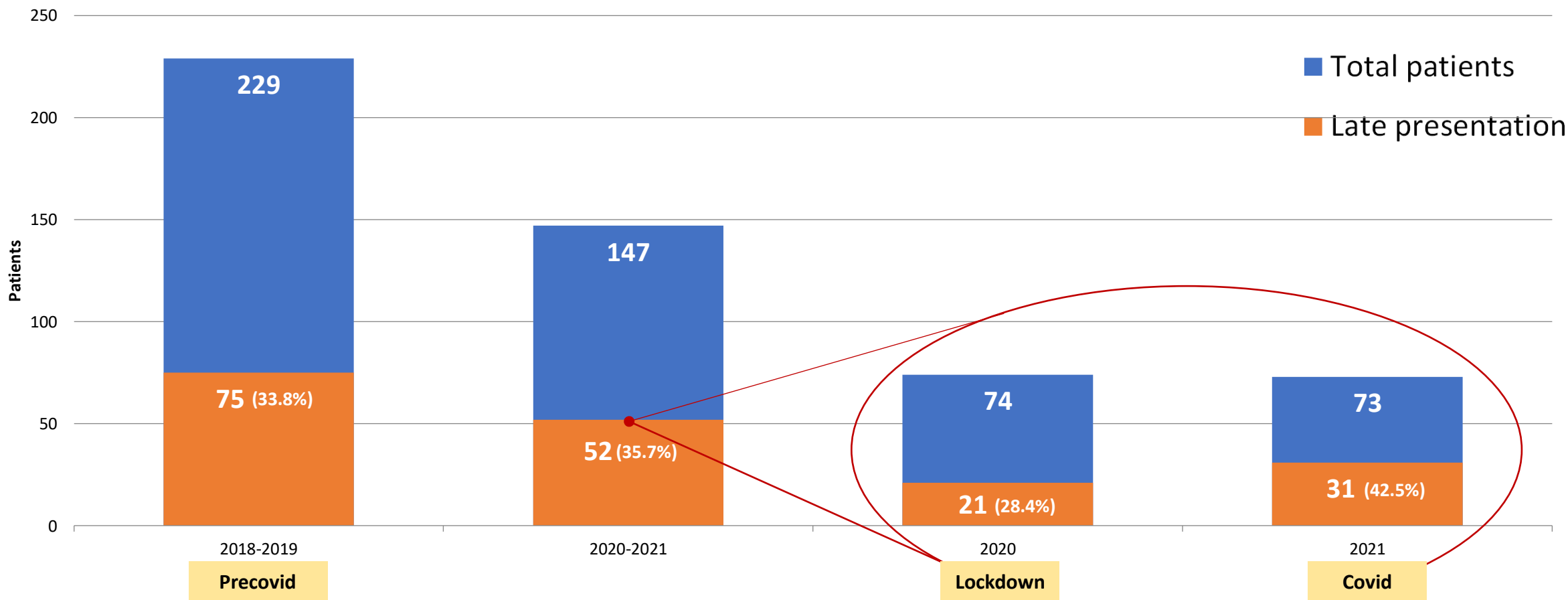
## Results

In our cohort 77% of patients were born in Spain and 23% outside Spain predominantly from Eastern Europe, Pakistan and South America



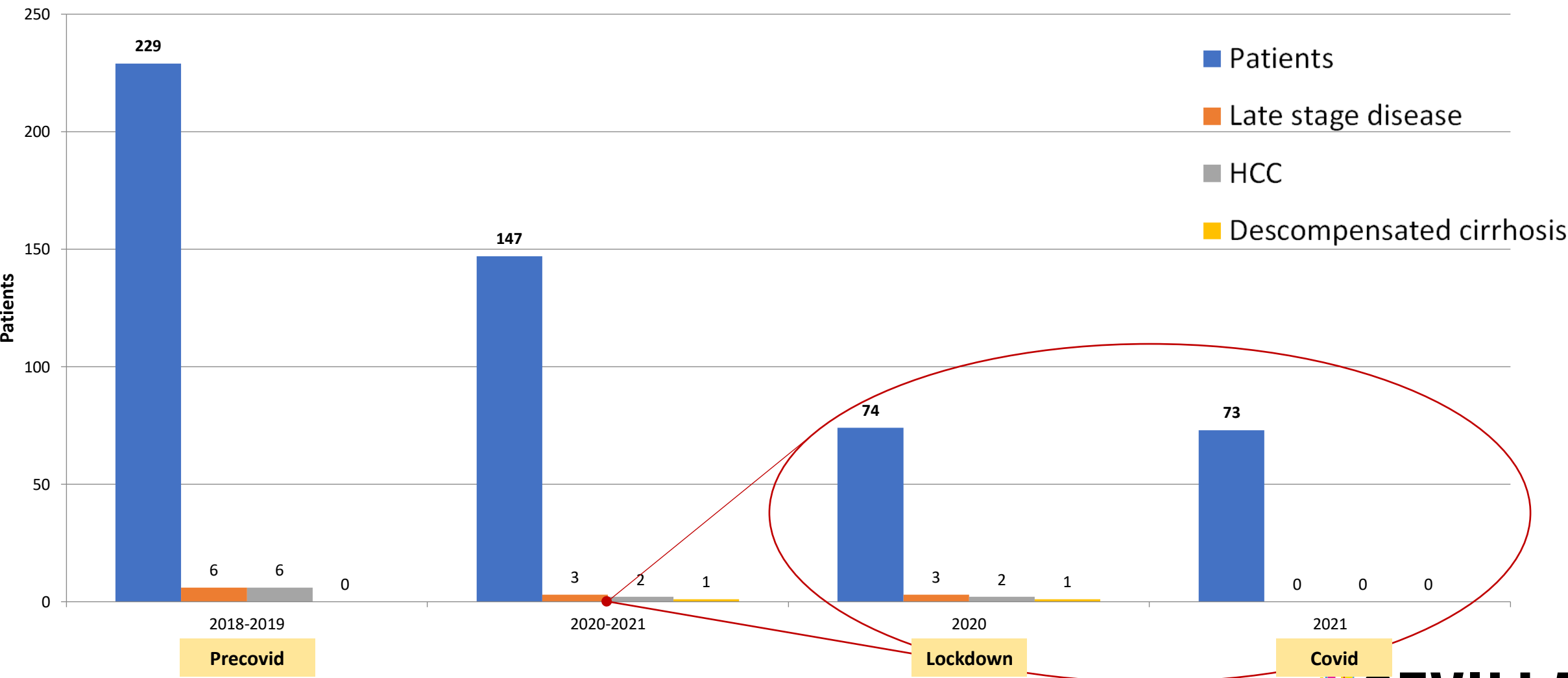
**Spain (n = 290)**  
**Georgia (n = 29)**  
**Pakistan (n = 14)**  
Russia (n = 6)  
Ukraine (n = 5)  
Brazil (n = 3)  
Venezuela (n = 3)  
Romania (n = 3)

## Results: late presentation

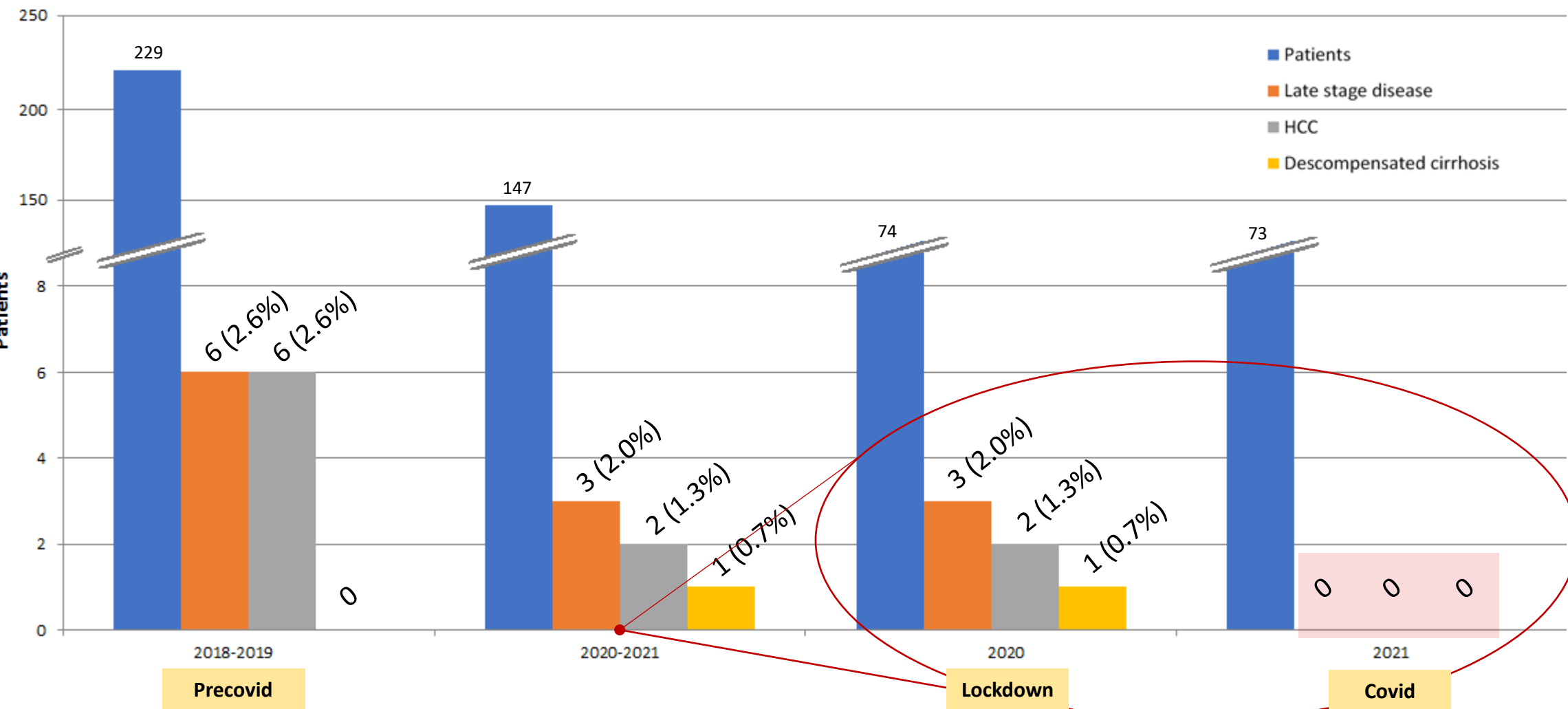


**42,5%** of patients attended in 2021 had late presentation and therefore significant fibrosis at the time of first specialist consultation therefore they would require long term follow up.

Results: late stage liver disease

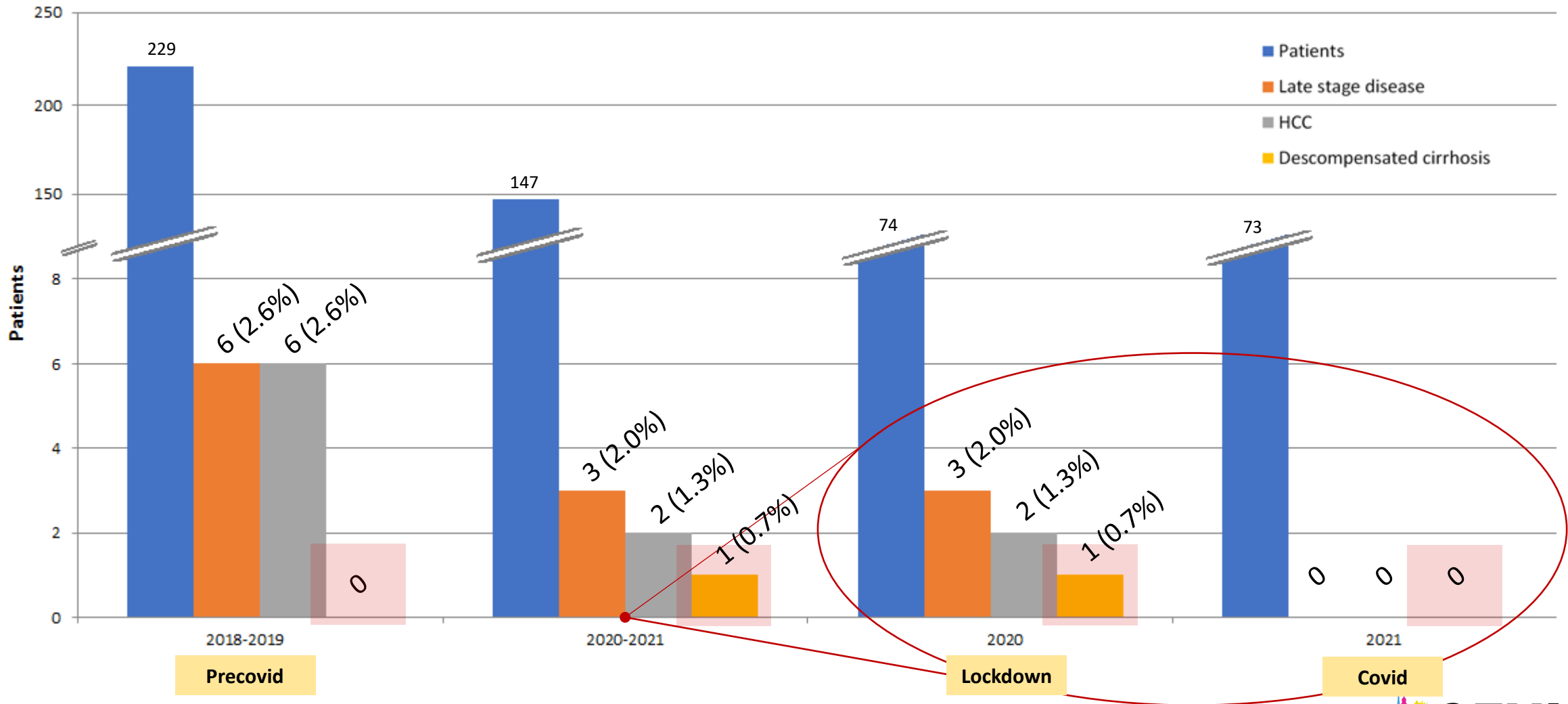


Results: late stage liver disease





## Results: late stage liver disease



## Conclusion

- The COVID19 pandemic caused a **reduction of outpatient attendance at first hepatology consultation by 36%.**
- The limited access to screening and diagnosis could have **increased the percentage of patients with late presentation for care in 2021.**
- This could lead to a delay in WHO elimination plans for HCV.