Poor HCV Literacy among Men who have Sex with Men as a Barrier to HCV Elimination

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Background

- An estimated 58 million people have chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection, and an estimated 1.5 million new HCV infections occur annually.

- Although direct-acting antiviral regimens lead to sustained viral suppression (cure), the world is off-track to meet the World Health Organization (WHO) goal of eliminating HCV by 2030, particularly among key populations, including men who have sex with men (MSM).
Methodology

• An online survey was fielded in six countries: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United States.

• Respondents self-declared as MSM and were aged ≥18 years of age.

• The survey’s aim was to gauge MSM perceptions about HCV and literacy regarding HCV testing and treatment (N=1,400).

• Analyses were conducted of data from 44 Fast-Track Cities (FTCs) across the six countries (Canada [3], France [3], Germany [4], Italy [2], Spain [4], and the United States [28]). City data were aggregated by country.
Results

More than half (53%) of global respondents said they lack information about HCV and how to prevent infection.
Results

Although successful HCV treatment can lead to cure, 18% and 26% of global respondents do not believe it is possible to cure HCV or not sure whether HCV can be cured.
Results

Almost half (49%) of global respondents confirmed they have been tested for HCV, and of those 22% reported a positive diagnosis.
Results

Of the 294 respondents who believe they are at risk of HCV infection, only 50% said they “very likely” to get tested if they thought they had been exposed to HCV.
Conclusions

• Poor HCV literacy among MSM is contributing to suboptimal levels of testing and treatment among this key population of people vulnerable to HCV infection.

• The WHO targets for diagnosing 90% of people living with HCV and treating 80% of those by 2030 cannot be met without closing gaps across the HCV care continuum for MSM.
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