

## Current major event

### Hepatitis; Know it. Confront it.

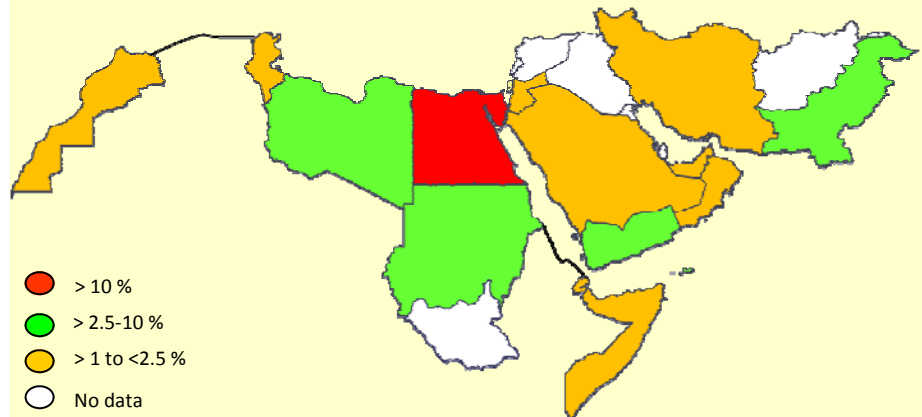
On 28 July 2012, the World Hepatitis Day will be celebrated across the world including in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) of WHO. The theme of this year's World Hepatitis Day is: "It's closer than you think. Know it. Confront it". The campaign, this year, focuses on raising awareness of the different forms of hepatitis: what they are and how they are transmitted; who is at risk; and the various methods of prevention and treatment.

### Editorial note

Hepatitis is a disease of the liver. A group of viruses may infect the body through either consumption of contaminated food and water or exposure to unsafe blood and infected body fluids. Viral hepatitis can be acute or chronic and may result in serious complications and even death. Viral hepatitis affects 1 in every 12 people worldwide. Around 500 million people worldwide are chronically infected with two types of blood borne hepatitis: hepatitis B and C. Approximately 1 million people die each year from related complications, most commonly from liver diseases including liver cancer.

All types of viral hepatitis occur throughout the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Some countries in the Region have higher infection rates for hepatitis C and hepatitis E than any other country in the world. In the EMR, approximately 17 million people are living with hepatitis C virus infection and approximately 4.3 million people are infected with hepatitis B virus every year. The World Health Organization has accumulated good evidence on modes of transmission of hepatitis and effective means of its prevention and control. Provision of safe food and water can prevent hepatitis A and hepatitis E. Within health facilities, screening of blood and blood products, safe injection practices and clean dental work can significantly reduce the risk of infection from hepatitis B and C. At the community and individual level, certain harmful behavioural

### Estimated prevalence rate (%) of hepatitis C virus infection in the EMR



Source: Weekly Epidemiological Record, Volume-77, Issue-6, 08 February 2002.

Global burden of Viral hepatitis	
Hepatitis	Burden
Hepatitis A	About 1,400,000 new infections occur each year.
Hepatitis B	More than 350,000,000 people are chronically infected
Hepatitis C	Some 150,000,000 people are chronically infected
Hepatitis D	Unknown. Both super-infection and co-infection occur with hepatitis B virus
Hepatitis E	Unknown. Infection in pregnancy is associated with a high risk of complications including deaths

practices like reuse of razor blades and injection syringes, unsafe sex, tattooing and sharing needles by injecting drug addicts increase the risk of infections with hep B and C virus substantially.

The World Hepatitis Day is an opportunity to focus attention on what can be done for prevention and control of viral hepatitis. Effective vaccines are available that can provide life long protection from hepatitis B infection. The chronic nature of the hepatitis B and C calls for strong focus on screening, care and treatment. With early detection and appropriate management, the quality of life of millions of people living with this disease can be improved. Hepatitis is a preventable disease. The governments, civil society, NGOs, academia, patient groups, and health professionals need to combine efforts to confront and combat this silent epidemic.

## Update on outbreaks

### in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

**Avian influenza** in Egypt; **Dengue** and **CCHF** in Pakistan; **Measles** in Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia.

### Current public health events of international concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

#### Avian influenza

China	[43(28), <b>65.1%</b> ]
Egypt	[168 (60), <b>35.7%</b> ]
Indonesia	[190 (158), <b>83.1 %</b> ]
Viet Nam	[123(61), <b>49.5%</b> ]
Cambodia	[21(19), <b>90.4%</b> ]
Bangladesh	[ 6(0), <b>0% ]</b>
Global total	[607(358), <b>58.9%</b> ]

#### Measles

Afghanistan	[261 (0), <b>0% ]#</b>
Somalia	[1046 ( ? ) ]#
Yemen	[3800(124), <b>3.3% ]#</b>

#### Crimean-congo haemorrhagic fever

Pakistan	[28 (6) <b>21.4% ]#</b>
Afghanistan	[6(1), <b>16.6% ]#</b>

#### Hand Foot & Mouth Disease (caused by Enterovirus 71)

Cambodia	[59 (52), <b>88.1% ]</b>
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CFR=Case-Fatality Rate; # Suspected cases