

# **The Silent Killer**

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## **Introduction**

Imagine. Waking up every morning hoping you will not have one of those days that force you not go to work. Suddenly, you have a sharp pain in your stomach, not being able to move. For some people, every morning they wake with a high chance this will happen. These people are living with Hepatitis C, also known as the silent killer. It is called the silent killer because you can be living with this and not know you have it until later in your life. About 150 million people are chronically infected with this disease. In the world, about 350 thousand people die every year from Hepatitis C related causes.

That is why Hepatitis C should be considered a bigger issue. Hepatitis C is a disease which primarily affects the liver. Hepatitis C is a serious disease because the liver is needed to remove toxins that build up in the blood. Hepatitis C can destroy the liver and cause cirrhosis and death. It is the main cause of liver transplants in the world.

## **Explain Issue**

Hepatitis C is a disease which kills many people every year. Hepatitis C is a form of viral hepatitis transmitted in infected blood, causing chronic liver disease. You cannot get hepatitis C from casual contact such as hugging, sneezing, coughing, or sharing food or water with someone. You can get hepatitis C if you come into contact with the blood of someone who has hepatitis C. The most common way to get hepatitis C is by sharing needles and other equipment. Before 1991, people could get hepatitis C through blood transfusions and organ transplants. Since 1991, all donated blood and organs are screened for hepatitis C. Now it is rare to get the disease this way.

Hepatitis C affects people both locally and globally. About 3.2 million Americans are infected with hepatitis C. Studies show that about  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of infected adults are unaware they have the disease. Also, Hepatitis C now kills more people in the US than HIV. But, this is only how it affects us here. Every year, 3 – 4 million people are infected with the Hepatitis C virus. More than 350 000 people die from hepatitis C-related causes every year. So, this means about 15% of the people who become infected every year pass away.

People say many different things about Hepatitis C. When some people hear about Hepatitis C they do not think much of it. Most people have never even heard of it. When I started my project on Hepatitis C, I made a survey which I then sent to some people. Most people had

never even heard of Hepatitis C. This showed me Hepatitis C needed a lot more awareness.

### **Current Events**

Recently India, Egypt, and Brazil have secured access to Sovaldi, an incredibly effective and expensive Hepatitis C treatment, for one percent of its cost in America. This 12-week treatment program that runs U.S. insurance companies \$84,000 per cycle, will be just \$840 in these nations. Burma, Kenya, Mozambique, and Iran will pay slightly more. They will pay \$900 for the full treatment program, or 1.1 percent of the standard price. So what determines who gets a discount and who doesn't? Their global pricing model is based on a country's ability to pay. So, this means countries who have limited funds will pay less. This will insure more people get their necessary medication.

People in countries such as these are benefitting a lot because of this. Now some people infected with HCV that could not afford treatment can now afford it. However, while the countries that most need and cannot afford the drug were greatly helped, many other nations may not be able to negotiate such a low price. So, people from wealthier countries will have to pay a lot more to receive their treatment, even if some people can not afford it. Therefore, not all people have access to their necessary treatment.

### **Methods of Change**

Currently, there are many organizations that are helping this issue, both locally and globally. For example, The American Liver Foundation is a non-profit organization that promotes liver health and disease prevention. The mission of the ALF is to facilitate, advocate, and promote education and support and research for prevention, treatment and cure of liver disease. Another organization helping this issue is the Greenview Foundation, a charity raising money for medical research on this disease with the hopes to improve the diagnosis and education of Hepatitis C patients all around the world.

The American Liver Foundation hosts various events to raise money for Hepatitis C research. They also work hard to create more awareness to not only Hepatitis C, but also many liver diseases. If you go to the Greenview Foundation's website you can find out more about hepatitis C, donating money, and events that are coming up.

## Call for Action

*Are you now interested in taking action? Here are some organizations and projects that you can participate in to help. If you are not interested in these organizations and projects consider started your own project to support Hepatitis C.*

ORGANIZATION/PROJECT	WHAT IT IS	CONTACT INFORMATION
American Liver Foundation	The American Liver Foundation's mission is to facilitate, advocate and promote education, support and research for the prevention and cure of liver disease	212-668-1000 Mailing Address: 39 Broadway, Suite 2700 New York, New York 10006
Hepatitis Foundation International	The hepatitis c foundation international is dedicated to liver health and the prevention of liver related diseases. They inform and educate by making available reliable and up-to-date facts	301-879-6891 800-891-0707 <i>Mailing Address:</i> <i>1955 Briggs Chaney Rd.</i> <i>Silver Spring, MD 20905</i> <i>USA</i> <i>Information requests:</i> <a href="mailto:info@hepatitisfoundation.org">info@hepatitisfoundation.org</a> <i>Planned giving, tribute donations, bequests &amp; trust gifts:</i> <a href="mailto:development@hepatitisfoundation.org">development@hepatitisfoundation.org</a>
Greenview Foundation	The Greenview Foundation is a charity which is raising money for medical research and to improve the diagnosis and education of Hepatitis C patients worldwide	800-458-3348 Mailing Address: 8178 Jackson Rd, Suite A Ann Arbor, MI 48103 USA Email: <a href="mailto:support@greenviewdata.com">support@greenviewdata.com</a>

Hepatitis C Association	The focus of the Hepatitis C Association is to educate the public, both patients and medical providers, about hepatitis C virus	877-435-7443 Mailing Address: 1351 Cooper Road Scotch Plains, NJ 07076-2844 Email: <a href="mailto:info@hepcassoc.org">info@hepcassoc.org</a>
WHO: World Health Organization	The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health	+ 41 22 791 21 11 Mailing Address Avenue Appia 20 1211 Geneva 27 Switzerland Email: <a href="mailto:phedoc@who.int">phedoc@who.int</a>

*How do I want to help? I have noticed many people do not know about Hepatitis C, so I would like to educate more people on this disease. To do this I can make a website about Hepatitis C a share it with people. I would also want to maybe make posters and educate people in my neighborhood.*

## Conclusion

This report talks about how Hepatitis C should be considered a bigger issue. In my report I talk about some projects and foundations that are supporting Hepatitis C, which are all making a difference. If you are not interested in participating in the organizations that I have listed here you should think about starting your own. Although it may seem like you are not making a difference, every little thing that is done helps create awareness. Everything starts small before it can be something big. So start small and you can help make a difference.

## **Bibliography**

*Wikipedia*

<https://www.wikipedia.org/>

*American Liver Foundation*

<http://www.liverfoundation.org/>

*Hepatitis Foundation International*

<http://www.hepfi.org/>

*Greenview Foundation*

[http://www.greenviewdata.com/community/hepatitis\\_c\\_fund.php](http://www.greenviewdata.com/community/hepatitis_c_fund.php)

*Hepatitis C Association*

<http://www.hepcassoc.org/>

*World Health Organization*

<http://www.who.int/en/>