



news release

Stop “Silent epidemic”: Research-based pharmaceutical industry report supports comprehensive approach to viral hepatitis

Geneva, 20 May 2014 – The [International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations](#) (IFPMA) has published today a new report and recommendations on Hepatitis encouraging a comprehensive approach to fighting this silent epidemic. Titled “[Towards a Sustainable, Intersectoral Approach to Viral Hepatitis](#)”, the report is meant to inform the upcoming discussion at the 67th World Health Assembly.

Hepatitis B and C (HBV, HCV) are devastating viral diseases which are more common than HIV/AIDS. The virus progresses very slowly over the years. As a result many patients are unaware they are infected until serious complications emerge. 15-30% of people with chronic HCV infection will develop cirrhosis; HCV is the major cause of liver cancer. Viral hepatitis is responsible for 1.6 million deaths each year causing individual suffering and putting a huge cost to society in terms of lost productivity and cost of healthcare services.

“We have devoted substantial efforts to developing prevention and treatment options and are making all necessary efforts to bring up solutions that further increase cure rates and reduce treatment duration and toxicity” – says Eduardo Pisani, IFPMA Director General. “However, treatment is only part of the picture. Experience our industry gained through [health partnerships](#) in low- and middle-income countries makes it clear that to address hepatitis we need a comprehensive approach that combines research, prevention, screening and care. We need to act together to stop this silent epidemic,” Pisani adds.

While 95% of HBV patients could be treated and 90% of HCV patients potentially cured, at most 20% and 2-3% of them respectively receive adequate treatment. IFPMA’s [Report](#) contributes to the global health discussion on the best way of fighting the epidemic. It recommends a comprehensive approach to:

- Raise awareness and improve the understanding of viral hepatitis and prevention methods, both among health professionals and individuals (including also prevention of nosocomial transmission and special focus on vulnerable high-risk groups).
- Continue implementing vaccination programmes against HBV.
- Collect reliable data on the epidemiology and burden of viral hepatitis.
- Improve funding and availability of screening to help patients seek early diagnosis and improved funding for treatment programmes.
- Develop comprehensive care networks with embedded standards of care.
- Leverage existing HIV infrastructure to improve detection and treatment rates for co-infected people.

About IFPMA:

IFPMA represents the research-based pharmaceutical companies and associations across the globe. The research-based pharmaceutical industry’s 1.3 million employees research, develop and provide medicines and vaccines that improve the life of patients worldwide. Based in Geneva, IFPMA has official relations with the United Nations and contributes industry expertise to help the global health community find solutions that improve global health.

For further information, please contact:

Mario Ottiglio, Director, Public Affairs & Global Health Policy

Tel: +41 22 338 32 11 – E-mail : m.ottiglio@ifpma.org