

# Assessing Knowledge and Awareness of Viral Hepatitis among Mongolian Population

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## Introduction

Mongolia has one of the highest prevalence of hepatitis B, C and D viruses in the world. However, most of the affected people are not aware of their infection status and it is important to evaluate the knowledge and awareness of viral hepatitis among the Mongolian population.

## Purpose

In this study, we evaluated the current understanding about transmission routes of hepatitis B and C viruses and general awareness within the general population in Mongolia.

## Materials and Methods

Total of 1590 people were enrolled in this study, including 570 (36%) males and 1020 (64%) females. Age of study subjects ranged from 11 to 83 years old. Among the subjects 41.8% had higher education, 34.3% completed high school, 12.4% had specialized technical education, 9.2% had secondary education, 1.7% had primary education, and 0.4% had no education. Knowledge and awareness assessment questionnaire contained 14 different questions in addition to general background information.

## Results

Nearly 60% of study participants correctly identified that blood transfusion, needle injection, and medical procedures are major infection pathways for viral hepatitis. But still around 32% of study subjects did not know these transmission routes, whereas small percentage ~3% of participants had incorrect information. Interestingly, 50.5% of participants did not know that HBV can transmit sexually, while 33.9% correctly responded to this question, indicating a big gap of knowledge and awareness. 42.2% and 26.9% of participants correctly responded that shaking hands or kissing do not put them in risk for hepatitis infection, whereas 43.7% and 49.7% of participants still did not know the answer. Also the study results showed that knowledge and awareness of study subjects about viral hepatitis transmission is positively correlated with their education level ( $p < 0.005$ ).

## Conclusion

In certain areas, especially transmission routes involving blood transfusion, medical procedures, and needle injection, Mongolian public do have relatively good knowledge and awareness. This may stem from the fact that viral hepatitis is known for needle infection disease in Mongolia. On the contrary, sexual transmission of HBV is not well known among the Mongolian public. At the same time, 36% of Mongolian population is still not aware that viral hepatitis can lead to liver cirrhosis and cancer and that it can lead to death.