

Hepatitis Prevention, Control and Elimination Program in Mongolia: A Model for Eliminating Major Cancer-Causing Infectious Disease Globally

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Prevention, early diagnosis and treatment are three main pillars of infectious disease control. Viral hepatitis is not only an infectious disease, but also it is the main cause of deadly liver cirrhosis and liver cancer. In 2010, liver cancer was the third leading cause of cancer mortalities globally. It was also reported that hepatitis B and C together killed 1.285 million people in 2010, which is more than number of mortalities due to malaria or tuberculosis. Mongolia has the world's highest rate of liver cancer mortality—nearly eight times the global average. Prevalences of chronic viral hepatitis B, C, and D in Mongolia are at an endemic level and constitute the main cause for Mongolia's world-leading liver cancer mortality rate, which has been steadily increasing over the last decade. At the moment, liver cirrhosis and liver cancer mortalities account for 15% of all annual mortalities in Mongolia, and it is projected to increase in the future. In short, the viral hepatitis endemic is wreaking havoc in Mongolian society. Deficiencies in the Mongolian health care system for prevention, early diagnosis and control of chronic conditions compound the endemic. To address this serious challenge, we are implementing the Hepatitis Prevention, Control and Elimination Program by bringing together breakthrough innovations, technologies, industry cooperations, and novel implementation approaches. Defined as the MISSION 2020, the main objectives of the HPCE Program in Mongolia are straightforward yet very ambitious:

- *To eliminate cancer-causing hepatitis C virus in Mongolia by 2020*
- *To reduce mortalities related to liver cirrhosis and liver cancer by 50% in Mongolia*

The HPCE Program in Mongolia is divided into three main intrinsically inter-dependent campaigns with specific focuses on prevention, screening, and treatment. Impact of the HPCE Program will be extraordinary on the ground in Mongolia. In fact, according to the treatment dynamics model that was published recently, over 45,000 lives will be saved from dying of liver cirrhosis and liver cancer by 2030 in the process of eliminating HCV. Finally, the HPCE Program will serve as a model for other countries in their fight against viral hepatitis.