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Launch of Euro Hepatitis Care Index

Sofitel, Brussels, 06.11.2012

Recipe for saving lives

In European health care, the detection of viral hepatitis is a serious issue. Even in countries with good prevention policies, less than 40 % of infections are actually known. Millions of Europeans are unaware of their hepatitis. And governments fail to produce effective policies to fight the disease, even in spite of the alarming figure of 125 000 Europeans dying each year from hepatitis-related diseases such as liver cancer, liver cirrhosis, etc.

Among the high-risk groups for acquiring and spreading the disease there are professional healthcare workers and prison inmates.

Governments should be made aware of the need for effectively protecting healthcare staff against hepatitis infection. An important element in this is prevention.



The Euro Hepatitis Care Index is a project set up by the European Liver Patient Association (ELPA) and Health Consumer Powerhouse with the support of the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL). The Index gives information about the way in which European countries deal with hepatitis. The criteria used are prevention, screening, treatment, national strategy and outcomes. Countries are given a score out of 1000. In 2012, the country with the best score was France with a score of 872. The country with the worse score was Lithuania with a score of 555.

A meeting intended for the presentation and discussion of the Euro Hepatitis Care Index was set up in Brussels, on 6 November 2012, in Sofitel. The organiser was the ELPA with the support of the Cypriot presidency. Information about the Index was given by Dr Beatriz Cebolla, collaborator of the Swedish think-tank Health Consumer Powerhouse, who had played an important part in developing the European Hepatitis Index (EHepI). What is good hepatitis care? In general, good hepatitis care starts with raising both

professional and public awareness as an important component of reducing the burden of undiagnosed infection. In particular, it was stressed that there is a need for improving initiatives in the field of prevention, the situation in prisons and national action plans. Moreover, it was indicated that there is a need for having qualified professionals such as hepatitis specialist nurses.

Apart from the worrying situation of yet undetected cases of hepatitis among the general population, the problem of hepatitis detection and treatment is also a question which concerns in particular the prison sector. In order to reduce the acute problem of hepatitis in prisons, it was emphasised that there is a need for improving actions in the field of vaccination, testing, pre/post counselling and treatment in prisons.

Among the participants from various sources in the meeting such as medical doctors, researchers, lecturers and politicians, there was Bert Van Caelenberg, secretary general of Eurofedop. He referred to the risks which healthcare staff are running in dealing with patients who are infected with hepatitis. He welcomed the Index and confirmed the role it can play in the field of prevention for healthcare workers. He requested that a separate place in the study on hepatitis would be given to the risks run by healthcare workers.



More information (report, the index, general and local press releases):

<http://www.healthpowerhouse.com>

[Euro Hepatitis Care Index 2012](#)