



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

63rd Session
Side Event

HCV INFECTION IN PWID AND PRISONERS:

A ROADMAP TO HCV ELIMINATION IN ITALY

Organized by Italy and UNODC Prevention,
Treatment and Rehabilitation Section

Conference Room M6
Vienna International Centre
Wagramer Strasse 5

Vienna, Tuesday March 3, 2020

Rationale

Hepatitis C is an inflammation of the liver due to a viral infection, caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV), which can lead to acute and chronic hepatitis. Around 15% of infected persons clear spontaneously the virus within 6 months without any treatment, but the remaining 85% can develop a chronic disease leading to serious complications, such as cirrhosis or hepatocellular carcinoma. Only in Europe the number of people dying from hepatitis C virus infection is estimated to reach 180.000 subjects and more than 15 million are the persons with chronic HCV infection, of which a 30% is unaware of their infection due to the absence of any symptoms.

HCV infection is a major public health problem, both for the impact on individual health and on related social costs. World Health Organization (WHO) goal is to eliminate viral hepatitis in the world by 2030, by reducing new viral hepatitis infections by 80% and deaths due to viral hepatitis by 65% and by increasing new diagnoses by 90% and treatments by 80%.

HCV virus is commonly transmitted through the direct contact with the blood of virus carriers, namely by using and exchanging nonsterile syringes and needles for intravenous injection of drugs and / or through other routes of administration or exchange of drugs among consumers of substances. These consumers belong to two different categories of persons: PWID (People Who Inject Drugs) e/o PWUD (People Who Use Drugs).

There are no reliable data on the prevalence of hepatitis C among prisoners, nevertheless the highest risk-taking behavior among them for the transmission of the infection is drug abuse, particularly via intravenous injection, followed by piercing, tattoos and unprotected sex.

Event Program

- 13.00** **Welcome and introduction**
Pierpaolo Sileri,
Deputy Minister of Health
- 13.05** **Objectives of the Event**
Claudio Leonardi, MD
President of S.I.Pa.D.
Member of the Expert Group
on Treatment and Rehabilitation
UNODC
Marcello Tavio, MD
President of S.I.M.I.T., Italian
Society of infectious and Tropical
Diseases
- 13.10** **Prevalence of hepatitis C infection among the general population and high-risk groups in Italy and the importance of HCV healthcare pathways: assessment and results**
Massimo Andreoni, MD
Chairman of the Scientific
Committee of S.I.M.I.T.
- 13.30** **Drug Addiction Centers like “Points of Care”: the Italian Experience**
Lorenzo Somaini, MD
Chairman of the Scientific
Committee of S.I.Pa.D.
- 13.50** **End of Meeting**

Simultaneous translation provided