

# HEPATITIS C

## *The Silent Killer*

### What is hepatitis C?

Hepatitis is the inflammation of the liver. There are 5 types: A, B, C, D & E. Of these, hepatitis C caused by the hepatitis C virus or HCV is the deadliest. Over 71 million people, mostly from low- and middle-income countries, are infected, but are unaware and go untreated for years. This is why HCV is called the 'silent killer'. However, this disease is **CURABLE**.

### HOW DO YOU GET HCV?

HCV is a blood-borne virus, which you can get through

- blood transfusion;
- unsafe drug injection;
- unsafe healthcare settings;
- sexual practices that lead to exposure to blood; and
- mother to foetus transmission during pregnancy (less common).

Go to a doctor immediately if you have fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, yellowing of the skin and eyes, dark urine, nausea, and vomiting.

### CAN HCV KILL YOU?

HCV is one of the deadliest forms of hepatitis. In 2019, nearly 300,000 people died from HCV, mostly from complications like cirrhosis and liver cancer. **For every 100 people infected with HCV, about five to 25 will develop cirrhosis in the next 10 to 20 years.**

### HOW CAN YOU PREVENT OR TREAT HCV?

- Go to a healthcare facility that practices proper infection prevention and control measures; and
- Use condoms correctly during sex.

### HOW IS DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS RESPONDING TO HCV?

Doctors Without Borders treats people with HCV in several countries such as Iran, Myanmar, Ukraine, Pakistan, India and Cambodia.

Doctors Without Borders is pushing for direct-acting antivirals (DAAs) that are safe and effective in the treatment of HCV infection. But, DAAs are often very expensive and costly. By the end of 2019, 48 million people lack access to safer, more tolerable and more effective DAAs to treat their HCV infection.

The Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi), which Doctors Without Borders helped establish, led several clinical trials of DAAs ravidasvir (RDV) and sofosbuvir (SOF) in Malaysia in 2016. The results indicate that the RDV/SOF combination is comparable to the very best HCV therapies available today. In June, 2021, Malaysia approved the use of Ravida® (ravidasvir), which is indicated in combination with other medicinal products for the treatment of HCV infection in adults. This is the outcome of years of collaboration between DNDi and the Malaysian government to reduce barriers in access and affordability of HCV drugs for patients in Malaysia.

