



For Immediate Release

Asian NGOs launch collaboration to end hepatitis by 2030

Representatives of 30 organisations from across 13 Asian countries examined barriers to hepatitis elimination at Asia's largest conference on liver diseases

15 February 2017, Shanghai – For the first time at Asia's largest clinical conference on liver diseases, a NGO Joint Forum was held today to build collaboration in support of national hepatitis policymaking and service delivery. The event brought together organisations from 13 Asian countries representing 30 NGOs, hospitals, research institutes and the pharmaceutical industry for a full day of workshops to identify actions needed to eliminate hepatitis by 2030.

The Joint Forum, convened jointly by the [Asian Pacific Association for Study of the Liver](#) (APASL), the [Coalition to Eradicate Viral Hepatitis in Asia Pacific](#) (CEVHAP), the [World Hepatitis Alliance](#), and the [Chinese Foundation for Hepatitis Prevention and Control](#), was held in Shanghai, China on the first day of the annual conference of APASL, whose members are medical professionals working in hepatology in Asia.

Traditionally a scientific organisation, APASL opened up the conference this year to NGO participation. This opening up recognises the vital part NGOs will play if elimination of hepatitis is to be achieved by 2030, and the importance of close collaboration between the scientific community and civil society.

Viral hepatitis is a silent epidemic that kills 1.4 million people per year globally. Asia Pacific is the center of the epidemic where 1 million people die per year from viral hepatitis, a death rate three times higher than deaths from HIV/AIDS. Around the world, 400 million people live with chronic hepatitis, and the number will escalate as more undiagnosed people are screened and tested.

In May 2016, the World Health Organization released the Global Health Sector Strategy on Viral Hepatitis, which set the goal to eliminate hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

Professor Stephen Locarnini, Co-Chair of CEVHAP, stressed, "We can end the hepatitis epidemic by 2030. With medical advancement, there is no excuse to turn a blind eye any more. Countries now need to build infrastructure and public awareness in the way they had dealt with other large-scale public health threats. Civil society groups such as CEVHAP play a key role in shaping the right policies and helping governments deliver the best outcomes."

Chronic hepatitis B is preventable by vaccination and manageable with existing therapies, while chronic hepatitis C is now curable in over 95% of cases.



The Joint Forum examined the actions needed to overcome the four main barriers to elimination:

1. Social impact: Reducing stigma, discrimination and marginalisation of people living with hepatitis, and improving public education on the disease
2. Treatment and diagnosis: Scaling up treatment and diagnosis, reaching undiagnosed people, providing information and support to people with viral hepatitis
3. Treatment: building the infrastructure and training the health care workers who will be required to provide treatments
4. Access to therapy: ensuring that new treatments are available, accessible and affordable to all people with viral hepatitis throughout the region

Professor Jin-lin Hou, President of APASL 2017, Chair and Professor of Hepatology Unit, Nanfang Hospital, Southern Medical University in Guangzhou, China and also a CEVHAP Executive Committee Member, welcomed NGO participation at the conference: “The battle to fight hepatitis is not about treating 400 million or more cases by independent liver specialists. It requires health system reforms. NGOs play the indispensable role of bringing social problems to light and identifying gaps in health systems. We are glad to be able to host them at our conference this year.”

Conclusions drawn at the Joint Forum and a Joint Statement on Regional NGO Collaboration will be presented in a seminar at the APASL conference. The session will be livestreamed:

NGO Forum Report

Date: 18 February 2017

Time: 8:00am – 8:30am (Beijing Time)

Location: Yellow River Hall, Shanghai International Convention Centre

Live stream: <https://www.facebook.com/Cevhap>

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About Viral Hepatitis

[Viral hepatitis](#) is inflammation of the liver caused by a virus, and globally kills more than 1.4 million people every year. There are 5 different hepatitis viruses - hepatitis A, B, C, D and E. Hepatitis A is transmitted mainly through ingestion of contaminated food and water and there are an estimated 1.4 million cases each year. Hepatitis B is transmitted through contact with the blood or other bodily fluids of an infected person, most frequently from mother to child at birth, and approximately 240 million people are living with chronic infections. Hepatitis C is mainly transmitted through blood-to-blood contact such as unsafe injection practices and inadequate sterilisation of medical equipment. Hepatitis D is transmitted on through contact with infected blood and only occurs in people who are already infected with hepatitis B. Hepatitis E, like hepatitis A, is transmitted through ingesting contaminated food or water.

About APASL

Ever since its inception, in August 1978 in Singapore, APASL (Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver) never looks back but stick to its goal towards advancing the science and practice of Hepatology. Today it is one of the leading associations based on investigation and treatment of liver diseases in the world and the largest scientific body that upholds the standards and profession, research and create improved treatment methods for millions of liver patients particularly in the entire Asia Pacific Region.

Our members include all medical professionals dedicated to hepatology - its research, practice and care. We cover the region from Manchuria in the North, to Australia in the South, to the Pacific Islands in the East and Iran in the West. Our members are elected on their documented scientific publications. Mentoring, sharing of knowledge and dedication to professional growth and development are among the core values of APASL and its members.

For more information, please visit APASL Official Website: www.apasl.info.

About China Foundation for Hepatitis Prevention and Control

China Foundation for Hepatitis Prevention and Control (CFHPC) was founded in 1998 following approval from the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China. It is a national public welfare foundation with independent legal status. The objectives of the foundation are to: actively raise funds and acquire supplies; organize public welfare activities; promote the cause of hepatitis prevention and control in China; and to improve the general level of health in China.

For more information, please visit: www.cfhpc.org.



About CEVHAP

The Coalition to Eradicate Viral Hepatitis in Asia Pacific (CEVHAP) is the first organisation of its kind in the region, established as an independent, multidisciplinary body to advocate for public policy reform to reduce the burden of and ultimately eliminate viral hepatitis in Asia Pacific.

Incorporated in October 2010, CEVHAP membership is comprised of many world-renowned hepatitis experts, including people living with the infections, utilizing the collective expertise of its members to assist the region through partnership with a broad range of stakeholders, including government bodies in public policy formation and health education.

More recently, CEVHAP has contributed to the development of the WHO's Global Health Sector Strategy on Viral Hepatitis, and the Western Pacific Regional Action Plan for Viral Hepatitis. For more information, please visit www.cevhap.org, or follow CEVHAP on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Weibo](#).

About World Hepatitis Alliance

The World Hepatitis Alliance is an ambitious patient-led and patient-driven not-for-profit organisation who works with governments, national members and other key partners to raise awareness of viral hepatitis and influence global change – transforming the lives of the 400 million people living with viral hepatitis and the future we share. Find out more at www.worldhepatitisalliance.org.