

COVIMPACT Hepatitis

Assessing the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Viral Hepatitis B and C Elimination Efforts in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Duration

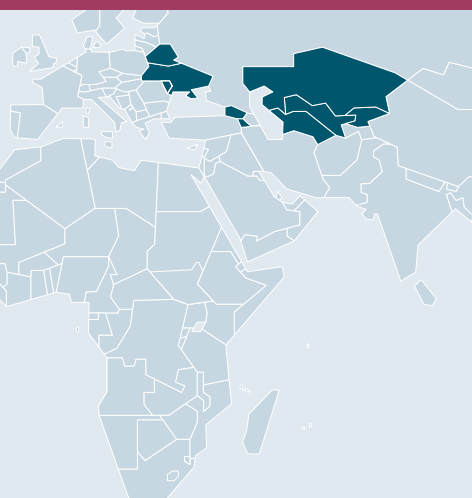
2021 – 2023

Budget

approx. 910,000 EUR

Partner countries

Armenia
Belarus
Georgia
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Republic of Moldova
Turkmenistan
Ukraine
Uzbekistan



Challenges addressed by the project

The first ever Action plan for the health sector response to viral hepatitis in the WHO European Region was endorsed in 2016 in order to contribute to efforts to eliminate viral hepatitis as a global public health threat by 2030. However, COVID-19 has significantly hindered national public health and healthcare systems in their capacity to eliminate hepatitis due to the necessity to re-allocate resources and personnel, diminished accessibility to services as well as supply of tests and medicine. The impact of COVID-19 on hepatitis elimination efforts is especially critical for countries with high burden of viral hepatitis and limited resources for testing and treatment, like many of the Eastern European and Central Asian countries.

Objectives

In this project, RKI in close collaboration with WHO Regional Office for Europe in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, will support countries in the WHO European region to:

- » Assess the impact of the pandemic on elimination activities, and consequently elimination indicators, including assessment of delays in the implementation of national viral hepatitis elimination efforts
- » Generate evidence and data for further assessment of the burden of viral hepatitis
- » Provide countries with technical support in reviewing national plans to scale-up viral hepatitis elimination activities during and after the COVID-19 pandemic
- » Support countries in developing viral hepatitis control and elimination contingency strategies during the pandemic and recovery plans for the immediate phase around the end of the pandemic

Overview of activities

On March 3rd 2021 RKI has been designated as WHO Collaborating Centre (WHO CC) for viral hepatitis and HIV. In the COVIMPACT Hepatitis project, the RKI in close collaboration with WHO Regional Office for Europe and countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia will assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on viral hepatitis B and C elimination efforts. The project will be divided into 5 work packages (WP):

- » WP1: the target countries will be chosen based on the COVID-19 situation in the respective country, country needs and availability of core stakeholders.

Supported by:



on the basis of a decision
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Hepatitis B and C virus cause liver inflammation
(Photo ©PIC4U - stock.adobe.com)



Diagnosing infection with hepatitis C (Photo ©Fotolia)

- » WP2: for each of the participating countries a desk-review of the current situation and review of the status of the national hepatitis elimination plan will be carried out.
- » WP3: country missions will be carried out to meet with stakeholders and to collect additional information and data on implementation of the national viral hepatitis elimination plans during the COVID-19 pandemic. The output will be country specific reports including detailed recommendations.
- » WP4: in two of the five countries, an in-depth study using a mixed-methods approach will be performed to assess the impact on a broader set of the direct and indirect indicators. Key informant interviews will be carried out and focus on the design of elimination plans and a social network analysis will be conducted. To the extent possible, a health facility survey will be designed to measure relevant indicators from a sentinel number of healthcare facilities. Survey data will be based on medical records and healthcare workers.
- » WP5: in the end of the project a workshop will bring together relevant stakeholders including national policy makers and program managers, RKI, and WHO to exchange lessons learned from contingency strategies during the pandemic and plans for scaling-up viral hepatitis control efforts after the pandemic.

Partner institutions

- » WHO Regional Office for Europe

Supporting institution in Germany/Contact

Robert Koch Institute

HIV/AIDS, STI and Blood-borne Infections (FG34)

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