

[World Hepatitis Day: EMCDDA showcases hepatitis questionnaire for drug service staff to refresh knowledge and identify training needs](#)

Every year, on 28 July, the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners mark [World Hepatitis Day](#) to increase awareness and understanding of viral hepatitis and the diseases it causes. It is estimated that around 290 million people worldwide are living with viral hepatitis, and many remain unaware of their status. Failure to identify the undiagnosed, and link them to care, means that millions will continue to suffer and lives will be lost. The focus of this year's campaign is therefore 'Find the missing millions.'

Transmitted through the sharing of needles, syringes and other injecting equipment, [hepatitis C](#) is the most common infectious disease among people who inject drugs in Europe. If HCV infection in this group is not addressed, there may be considerable costs in the future, both to individuals and to health budgets.

As part of its [harm reduction initiative](#) to increase access to hepatitis C testing and improve linkage to care, the EMCDDA is showcasing today its [knowledge questionnaire](#) designed for those working in drug treatment settings. The main aim of the [questionnaire](#) is to: allow those working in these services to refresh their knowledge on the hepatitis B and C viruses (HBV, HCV), including transmission, testing and care for people who inject drugs. The questionnaire also provides a practical tool for managers of drug treatment facilities to identify staff training needs and increases awareness among drug service staff of the importance of knowing their own HCV status.

The knowledge questionnaire, now available in seven languages (German, English, French, Italian, Dutch, Polish and Portuguese), covers a wide range of issues, including HCV and HBV prevalence, routes of transmission, prevention measures, treatment and testing options and international testing and treatment recommendations. This practical tool, which can be administered on paper or adapted to an online version, consists of a series of true statements which provide factual information on viral hepatitis. The answer format – 'I knew it already' or 'This is new to me' – allows participants to 'learn by doing' and to assess their own level of knowledge and refresh it.

The EMCDDA has created an online version of the survey in English as an example. [Click here](#) to test your knowledge.

EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel says: 'Staff working in drug services play a vital role, both in reaching people who may be at risk of hepatitis infections, and in linking them to care. They are an important source for informing people who inject drugs about infection risks and prevention, about available tests and effective treatment and about the type of medical

services they provide on-site. This questionnaire can help ensure that drug service professionals have up-to-date knowledge on viral hepatitis in order to help people who inject drugs access the care they need’.



Over the past [25 years](#), the EMCDDA has been monitoring the prevalence and incidence of blood-borne virus infections among people who inject drugs. In 1997, it published its first estimate of the burden of hepatitis C among this group, which highlighted the extent of what had, until then, been a ‘hidden epidemic’ in the shadow of HIV/AIDS. This triggered further research into the impact, costs and policy options regarding this disease, leading to an overview on the issue published in 2004. In the following years, the agency focused on identifying effective responses to prevent and reduce injecting-related harms and making this information available to policymakers and practitioners across Europe. Yet, despite the availability of new highly effective treatments for hepatitis C infection, access to testing and care for people who inject drugs still remains limited today. In line with countries’ commitment to eliminate hepatitis C as a public health threat by 2030 ⁽¹⁾, the EMCDDA launched a new harm reduction initiative on hepatitis C in 2018. Through this initiative, the agency now offers a set of practical resources aimed at supporting countries in promoting HCV testing and care for this vulnerable group through drug services.

#WorldHepatitisDay #FindTheMissingMillions #emcdda25