

# Optimizing medicines and treatment regimens for hepatitis C patients in Pakistan

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## DESCRIPTION

- Pakistan has the second highest disease burden of hepatitis C virus (HCV) in the world, with 5% prevalence in general population (8 million) [1].
- Genotype 3 is most prevalent (85%) and is difficult to treat with interferon based regimens [2].
- The introduction of new Direct Acting Antiviral (DAA) drugs for HCV has been a breakthrough in treatment of chronic HCV in Pakistan.
- When DAAs were first introduced into the United States, the costs were prohibitive and were a major barrier to access. However, since introduction, costs have decreased considerably in many parts of the world, and increasing access through cost reduction became a major focus of Pakistan's Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHSRC).
- Following negotiations with manufacturer, the Ministry of NHSRC registered branded and generics DAAs at much discounted rates.

## PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT

- Pakistan's Ministry of NHSRC registered Sovaldi (branded sofosbuvir) at a price of \$330 per month (note: treatment courses can range from three to six months), in 2015 which was a 98% decrease from the original price when launched in the United States in 2013. Subsequently, generics were introduced at a price of \$25 per month.
- In 2017, public sector, Provincial Hepatitis Programs are procuring generic sofosbuvir at a further discounted price of \$15 per month which, to our knowledge, is the lowest price in the world.
- Recently Daclatasvir is also registered and easily available at a price of \$30 per month .
- Availability and affordability of these medicines is increasing access to treatment for HCV infected persons in Pakistan
- Availability of new DAAs at discounted rates will support the scale up of treatment in Pakistan, leading to possibility of reaching the WHO target of eliminating hepatitis C by 2030.

## WHY IS THIS INNOVATIVE?

- Government of Pakistan provides free diagnosis, treatment and care to hepatitis patients in all provinces through four Hepatitis Prevention and Control programmes.
- Patients who cannot afford hepatitis C medications receive them free of charge from Provincial Hepatitis Control Programs (Public Sector).
- Pakistan has the lowest cost DAAs (\$15 per month for public sector) available for treatment of hepatitis C patients in the world.
- Introduction and availability of new DAAs at this price is an innovation in itself because it will increase the availability and access to treatment and ultimately reduce the HCV disease burden in the country.
- Government of Pakistan is taking vigorous steps to register new upcoming DAAs to provide more effective treatment to hepatitis C patients of the country.

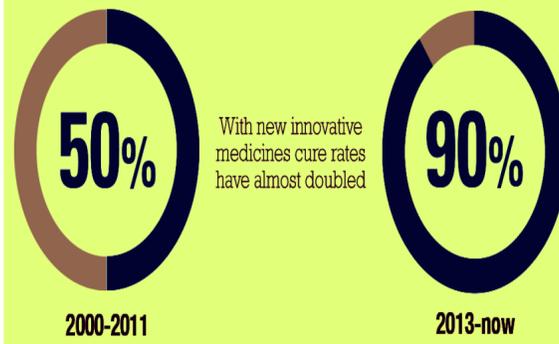
With new oral treatment, over 95% of people infected with chronic hepatitis C can be cured.



## THE VALUE OF TREATMENT

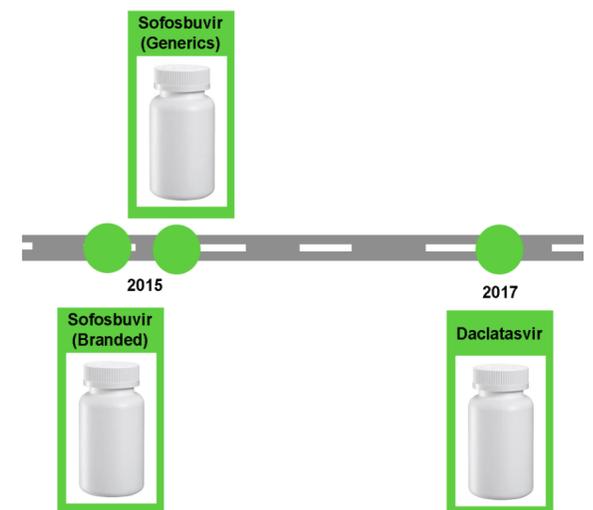
New and forthcoming medicines can halt disease progression and even provide a cure.

CURE RATES DOUBLED



California Healthcare institute 2017.

## DAAs registered in Pakistan



## CONCLUSIONS

- Though new oral medications for the treatment of hepatitis C patients are available at much discounted rates in Pakistan yet a major challenge remains in ensuring access and high quality delivery of medicines and services.
- There is a need to ensure quality of generic drugs now available, and that high quality treatment services and diagnostics are being offered to all patients seeking care and treatment for HCV infection.
- Government should also expedite the process of registering new upcoming medicines at affordable prices.

## REFERENCES

1. PMRC. National Survey on Prevalence of Hepatitis B & C in General Population of Pakistan; 2008. (Accessed on 12th September 2017) Available from URL: <http://www.pmrc.org.pk/part-1.pdf>
2. PMRC. Guidelines for the Treatment of the Persons with Chronic Hepatitis C Infection; 2015. (Accessed on 19th September 2017) Available from URL <https://www.dropbox.com/s/u8bv7196sc0h7/HCV%20Treatment%20Guidelines.pdf?dl=0>

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

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