

Syrian Arab Republic

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reports as follows.

National coordination

There is no written national strategy or plan that focuses exclusively or primarily on the prevention and control of viral hepatitis.

There is a designated governmental unit/department responsible solely for coordinating and/or carrying out viral hepatitis-related activities: the Viral Hepatitis Control Unit. It has four staff members. It is not known how many people work full-time on hepatitis-related activities in all government agencies/bodies.

Information was not provided on whether the government has a viral hepatitis prevention and control programme that includes activities targeting specific populations.

Awareness-raising and partnerships

Information was not provided on whether the government held events for World Hepatitis Day 2012 or has funded other viral hepatitis public awareness campaigns since January 2011.

The government collaborates with the following in-country civil society groups to develop and implement its viral hepatitis prevention and control programme: Syrian Red Crescent Society and Syrian Family Planning Association.

Evidence-based policy and data for action

There is routine surveillance for viral hepatitis. There is a national surveillance system for the following types of acute hepatitis: A, B, C, D and E, and for the following types of chronic hepatitis: B, C and D.

There are standard case definitions for hepatitis. Hepatitis deaths are not reported to a central registry. Information was not provided on the percentage of hepatitis cases reported as "undifferentiated" or "unknown" hepatitis.

Liver cancer cases and cases with HIV/hepatitis coinfection are registered nationally.

The government publishes hepatitis disease reports quarterly.

Hepatitis outbreaks are required to be reported to the government and are further investigated. Information was not provided on whether there is adequate laboratory capacity nationally to support investigation of viral hepatitis outbreaks and other surveillance activities.

There is a national public health research agenda for viral hepatitis. Information was

Population (in millions) (2011)	20.8
Country classification (2012)	Lower-middle-income
Gross national income per capita (PPP int \$) (2011)	\$5080
Total health expenditure as % of GDP (2010)	3.41%
Per capita total health expenditure (PPP int \$) (2010)	\$174.20
Per capita government health expenditure (PPP int \$) (2010)	\$80.13
Life expectancy at birth (in years) (2009)	74
Human Development Index (2011)	0.632
Median age (in years) (2010)	21
Total fertility rate per woman (2010)	2.9

not provided on whether viral hepatitis serosurveys are conducted regularly.

Prevention of transmission

Information was not provided on whether there is a national policy for hepatitis A vaccination or whether the government has established the goal of eliminating hepatitis B.

Information was not provided on the percentage of newborn infants nationally in a given recent year who received the first dose of hepatitis B vaccine within 24 hours of birth or the percentage of one-year-olds nationally (ages 12–23 months) in a given recent year who received three doses of hepatitis B vaccine.

Information was not provided on whether there is a national policy that specifically targets mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B.

Information was not provided on whether there is a specific national strategy and/or policy/guidelines for preventing hepatitis B and hepatitis C infection in health-care settings.

There is a national policy on injection safety in health-care settings, which recommends single-use syringes for therapeutic injections. Single-use or auto-disable syringes, needles and cannulas are always available in all health-care facilities.

Official government estimates of the number and percentage of unnecessary injections administered annually in health-care settings are not known.

There is a national infection control policy for blood banks. All donated blood units (including family donations) and blood products nationwide are screened for hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

There is no national policy relating to the prevention of viral hepatitis among people who inject drugs.

The government has guidelines that address how hepatitis A and hepatitis E can be prevented through food and water safety.

Screening, care and treatment

Health professionals obtain the skills and competencies required to effectively care for people with viral hepatitis through schools for health professionals (pre-service education), on-the-job training and postgraduate training.

There are national clinical guidelines for the management of viral hepatitis, but they do not include recommendations for cases with HIV coinfection.

The government has national policies relating to screening and referral to care for hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

People testing for both hepatitis B and hepatitis C register by name; the names are kept confidential within the system. Hepatitis B and hepatitis C tests are not free of charge for all individuals, but they are free of charge for blood donors. Hepatitis B and hepatitis C tests are compulsory for blood donors, couples planning to marry, patients on haemodialysis and those who undergo frequent haemotransfusion.

Publicly funded treatment for hepatitis B and hepatitis C is available to Syrian citizens and refugees. The government spends LS 700 000 (US\$ 11 112) per patient annually on publicly funded treatment for hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

The following drugs for treating hepatitis B are on the national essential medicines list or subsidized by the government: interferon alpha, pegylated interferon, lamivudine, adefovir dipivoxil, entecavir, telbivudine and tenofovir. The following drugs for treating hepatitis C are on the national essential medicines list or subsidized by the government: interferon alpha, pegylated interferon and ribavirin.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic welcomes assistance from WHO in one or more areas of viral hepatitis prevention and control (Annex C).