

POPULATION-BASED HEPATITIS C SCREENING AND ELIMINATION PROGRAM IN LITHUANIA: CURRENT RESULTS AND CHALLENGES

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Poster

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Lithuania's population-based HCV screening programme, launched in May 2022, screened 75.7% of the target birth cohort in 34 months and tripled the number of patients treated with direct-acting antivirals compared to the pre-screening period.

KEY POINTS

- Between May 2022 and February 2025, 1,362,472 people born 1945-1994 were screened for HCV antibodies with 1.28% testing positive; among 8,396 screened people who inject drugs or are HIV-positive, 28.9% were seropositive.
- Specialists consulted 58% of anti-HCV positive persons overall, with viremia detected in 53.1%; consultation rates differed significantly between the general population (63%) and risk groups (29%).
- During the 34-month programme period, 7,577 HCV patients were treated with direct-acting antivirals compared to 2,470 in the equivalent pre-programme period, a three-fold increase.
- Markov modelling showed that treating all infected patients by 2030 would meet WHO targets and could save 150 lives and prevent 90 cases of decompensated cirrhosis and 120 cases of hepatocellular carcinoma, whereas maintaining pre-screening treatment levels would fail to meet targets.
- The study authors conclude that despite abolished treatment restrictions, special measures are needed to improve motivation and compliance among risk group patients to achieve WHO 2030 elimination targets.

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