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TREATMENT CENTERS IN EGYPT



Providing care and treatment to persons infected with viral hepatitis can greatly improve their health outcomes and prevent transmission of these infections to others. Since 2006, Egypt has made great progress in the management of viral hepatitis in establishing a National Committee for the Control of Viral Hepatitis with 23 affiliated viral hepatitis treatment units distributed all over the country. Through these centers, a Viral Hepatitis National Treatment Program was launched in 2008. The main initial target of this governmental program was to provide antiviral medications at a reduced cost or even free for those who are not covered with the Health Insurance Organization (HIO). The role of these centers was then extended to be referral centers providing integrated care for the viral hepatitis patients, including for example screening for hepatocellular carcinoma, and to act as nuclei to establish a network for liver transplantation centers. Moreover, insured patients (i.e., between 45%-50% of the population in Egypt) can obtain free HCV treatment in 25 centers related to HIO. Viral hepatitis treatment can also be obtained in private facilities, but at a very high cost (six fold the reduced price of National Treatment Centers). Between 2006 and 2012, more than 220 000 HCV patients were treated in National Treatment Centers and HIO centers ([CDC, Morb Mortal Wkly Rep, 2012](#)). Outside the official National Treatment Program, Egypt has also provided treatment to 300 children, thanks to collaboration with NGOs and pharmaceutical companies.

The Egyptian viral hepatitis treatment program is one of the largest treatment programs instituted by a resource-limited country. The estimated cost of this program to the Egyptian government is \$80 million annually, which covers 40% of the total costs; the remaining 60% is paid by insurance companies (50%) and patients (10%). Thanks to market competition and availability of a local biosimilar of pegylated interferon (Reiferon Retard®, Minapharm®), the price of a standard 48-week course of HCV treatment has been progressively driven down through negotiations with the pharmaceutical manufacturers, decreasing more than six-fold in the last 6 years. Currently, one full course of HCV treatment costs the Egyptian government <\$2,000 ([Ford et al., Clin Infect Dis, 2012](#)).

NEWS & EVENT

Scientific Advisory Board Meeting

The Scientific Advisory Board Meeting was held in Paris February 15-16, 2013.

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Education, Training, and Events

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