Viral Hepatitis Surpasses TB, HIV and Malaria as a Cause of Death Globally

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The major strains of viral hepatitis, in particular hepatitis B and C viruses (HBV, HCV) have surpassed HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria as a cause of annual deaths globally. Publishing their findings in The Lancet, researchers analyzed data from the Global Burden of Disease study, looking at information on hep A, B, C and E from 1990 to 2013.

During those years, annual global deaths from viral hepatitis, specifically from acute infection, cirrhosis and liver disease, rose from 890,000 to 1.45 million, a 63 percent increase.

In 2013, 1.3 million people died of HIV, 1.4 million died of TB and 855,000 from malaria.

Ninety-six percent of the viral hepatitis deaths analyzed in the new study were a result of hep B or C. The death rates were higher in middle- and upper-income nations compared with lower-income countries. Most of the deaths occurred in East Asia. However, today the rate of viral hepatitis infection is more evenly spread between the different brackets of national wealth.

By the end of the study period, viral hepatitis had resulted in a cumulative 41 million years of lost life globally. Additionally, individuals lived 870,000 cumulative years with disabilities as a result of the collection of viruses.

To read the study abstract, click here.

To read a press release about the study, click here.

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