

## **GEORGIA HCV ELIMINATION PROGRAM**

Butsashvili, M

Georgia is among the countries with highest prevalence of HCV infection globally. In April, 2015 Georgia initiated HCV elimination program aiming 90% reduction in the prevalence of HCV infection by 2020. At first stage of the program, patients with advanced liver fibrosis (defined as METAVIR score of F3 or F4 by liver elastography) were enrolled. As of May, 2016, 9,257 patients begun treatment and 5,552 have completed the course. Of those who have completed the treatment and been tested for sustained viral response (SVR), 90.6% have achieved SVR.

In Georgia the estimated number of PWID is 40,000 (1.5% of the population aged 15-64). The study among male prisoners reported that 70% of respondents reported drug use at least once during lifetime. Out of those, 41% reported drug use in prison. HCV prevalence among PWIDs is high (54-92% seroprevalence according to different studies). Since May 2015 peer support intervention for PWIDs on treatment for HCV is conducted by Mediciens du Monde (MDM), aiming facilitating PWIDs access and retention in the national program and overcoming providers and PWIDs concerns about HCV treatment (enhance uptake, adherence, prevent re-infections). Descriptive operational research is ongoing to assess the effectiveness of the intervention by SVR rate and secondary outcomes, such as adherence and tolerance, behaviors at risk of re-infection and satisfaction.

We summarized data of one of the clinical sites, Neolab, where 1460 patients were enrolled in the treatment program and out of these, 57% reported ever using injection drugs. Treatment adherence with those not reporting drug use was compared by assessment of compliance to appointment schedule and the rate of sustained viral response (SVR). There was no statistically significant difference in treatment compliance among these two groups of patients. The research to estimate the re-infection rate among PWIDs is ongoing.