



## UNITAID: Innovating to fight Hepatitis C

Some 130-150 million people around the world are infected with chronic hepatitis C (HCV) and each year, 700,000 die from related diseases.

With new, shorter and less toxic treatments, HCV can be cured in 3 months. But in low- and middle-income countries, where 75 per cent of infections and deaths occur, only 1 per cent of people infected know their status.

Without proper diagnosis, people cannot get on treatment in time. Lack of data hampers planning to deal with the epidemic, and medicines are often prohibitively expensive.

**UNITAID is investing in three ways to turn around the HCV epidemic:**

### Diagnosics

People living with HIV are almost six times more likely to be infected with HCV, compared to those who are HIV-negative. UNITAID will invest in the **development of new tests** that will accurately diagnose HCV in patients co-infected with HIV and HCV.

### Data

Accurate, easy-to-use HCV tests give planners better data about how many people to screen and treat, and where the patients are. With **more accurate assessment of the epidemic**, resources can be allocated more efficiently.

### Discount drugs

UNITAID has made significant investment to **make HCV medicines more affordable** in partnership with the Coalition Plus, Lawyers Collective, Medicines Patents Pool, and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). With MSF, UNITAID is also seeking to simplify treatment regimens.

HCV is a virus that mainly affects the liver. At first patients have mild or no symptoms. But the virus persists in the liver in about 80 per cent of cases, and over many years it can lead to liver disease or cirrhosis.

HCV is spread mainly by blood-to-blood contact associated with intravenous drug use, poorly sterilised needles in healthcare, and transfusions. There is no vaccine.