LIVER CANCER CAN'T WAIT

Saving lives from liver cancer by eliminating hepatitis.

Viral hepatitis infection is the most common risk factor for liver cancer.[1] Chronic viral hepatitis can lead to hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC),[2] which accounts for 80% of all liver cancer cases[3] and is the third most common cause of cancer deaths worldwide.[4] Despite this, nearly half (42%) of people globally are not aware that one of the leading causes of liver cancer is viral hepatitis – according to research by the World Hepatitis Alliance.

World Hepatitis Alliance

HEP CAN'T WAIT!

THE FACTS

Hepatitis B leads to at least **56%** of all liver cancer cases[5]

2.1 million cases of cancer will be prevented by 2030 and **15 million** cases by 2050 if the global hepatitis elimination targets are met[6]

There is an estimated return on investment of **US$2–3 for every dollar invested** to prevent liver cancer deaths[6]

People living with hepatitis D are **at greater risk** of developing HCC than those only living with hepatitis B[7]

People living with hepatitis C have a **34% greater risk** of developing HCC than those uninfected[8] – some people are still at risk of developing HCC even if they have been cured of hepatitis C[9]

In the next **10 to 20 years**, the number of liver cancer cases related to hepatitis C is predicted to continue increase and **potentially double**[10]

Last updated August 2024

Did you know?

Hepatitis B is a virus that causes liver cancer at the same rate as someone who actively smokes one pack of cigarette per day.[11]

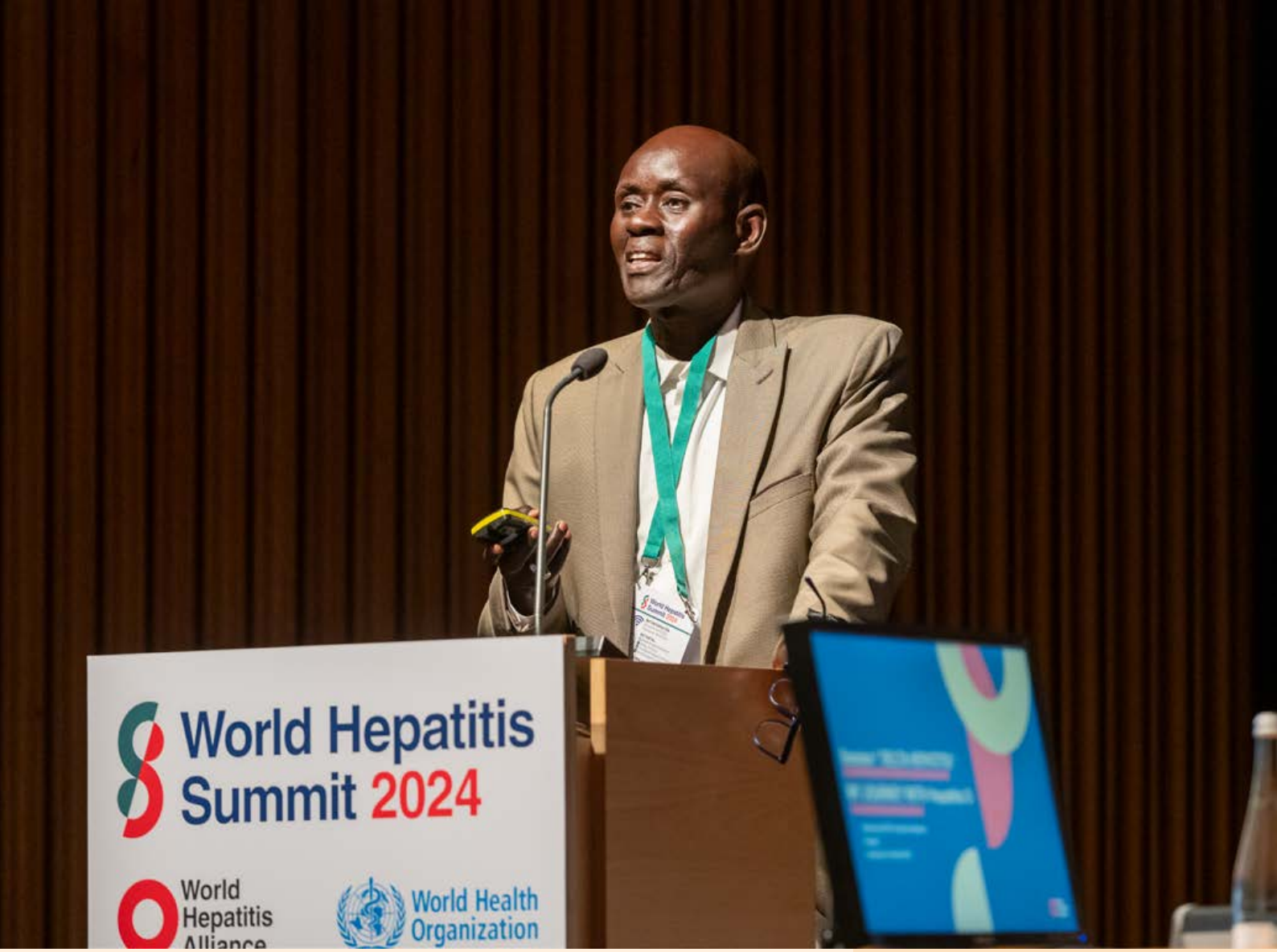
The global burden of viral hepatitis and liver cancer

WHO estimates that 254 million people were living with hepatitis B and 50 million people were living with hepatitis C in 2022. IARC scientists estimate that hepatitis B caused 380,000 cases of cancer and hepatitis C caused 170,000 cases of cancer globally in 2020.[12]

Africa and Asia are disproportionately impacted by viral hepatitis, which has led to both regions also being heavily burdened by liver cancer. Chronic hepatitis C is the primary cause of liver cancer in North America, Europe and Japan, while chronic hepatitis B is the leading cause in Africa and Asia.[13]

Top 10 countries with the highest incidence of liver cancer[14]

Global ranking	Country	Rate of liver cancer per 100,000 population
1	Mongolia	96.1
2	Egypt	32.0
3	Cambodia	25.1
4	Laos	24.9
5	Thailand	22.7
6	Guinea	21.3
7	Vietnam	20.2
8	Chad	19.1
9	The Gambia	17.9
10	Burkina Faso	17.1



Ibrahima's Story

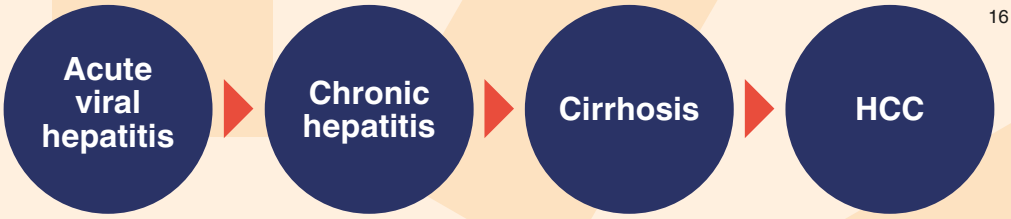
My name is Ibrahima Gueye, and I am from Senegal. In 2010, following a long illness, I was diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B with a coinfection with hepatitis D. Following my diagnosis, I faced a very rigorous follow-up with frequent tests and a very expensive treatment—having to take 2 loans and sell my house and car to cover my medical expenses. I also was the victim of stigmatisation in the workplace. I was physically, morally and financially devastated.

After a few years of follow up and treatment, I was diagnosed with liver cancer in 2016, which required chemo embolization. I later had to travel to Egypt in 2022 to receive a liver transplant from my daughter. The liver transplant was very successful and cured my liver cancer. I am also no longer a carrier of hepatitis B and hepatitis D.

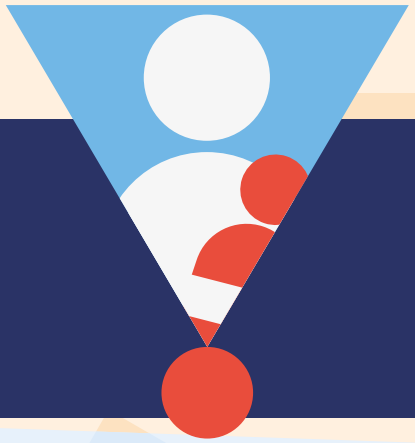
I founded Saafara Hepatites Senegal to fight against hepatitis and offer support to patients. It is my hope that through continued efforts, that we can raise awareness about viral hepatitis and liver cancer, which can easily be prevented by vaccination and treatment.

How hepatitis elimination also stops cancer

More than half of all liver cancer cases are caused by chronic hepatitis infection, but these cases are preventable.[10] Chronic hepatitis repeatedly attacks the liver, over time, this can lead to liver damage and cirrhosis,[15] which is the primary risk factor of HCC.[5]



- **Increased vaccination, screening and treatment for hepatitis B can prevent the disease from progressing to liver cancer.[17]**
- **Hepatitis C treatment prevents long-term liver damage, reducing the risk of developing liver cancer.[18]**
- **Ongoing monitoring of people living with viral hepatitis for HCC and other liver diseases can lead to early detection and treatment.[19]**



Did you know?

The hepatitis B vaccine was the first vaccination to prevent cancer.[20]

Hepatitis vaccination reduces the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

In 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) expanded their “NCD best buys” to include hepatitis B vaccination to prevent liver cancer. The NCD best buys set out cost-effective policy solutions for countries to manage NCDs.[21] Hepatitis B vaccination for liver cancer prevention is a ‘best buy’ and it is important that both the hepatitis and cancer communities ensure governments are actioning this as part of their cancer prevention strategies.

Calls to action

- The hepatitis and the cancer communities must come together to raise their collective voice to increase awareness of liver cancer's connection to viral hepatitis and call for greater action.

- Hepatitis vaccination, testing, treatment and care should be integrated into national cancer prevention and control strategies and programmes.
- Countries must invest now in hepatitis services to reduce the burden of NCDs.
- People living with viral hepatitis must have access to affordable and accessible treatment and ongoing monitoring for HCC and other liver diseases.

For more details on the connection between viral hepatitis and liver cancer, please contact us at contact@worldhepatitisalliance.org

Endnotes

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