Introduction to the VHPB

Viral Hepatitis Prevention Board

VHPB
The Viral Hepatitis Prevention Board

20 years of support to the control and prevention of viral hepatitis in Europe.
• **Mission statement**

The objective of VHPB is to contribute to the control and prevention of viral hepatitides:

- by drawing the attention to this important public health problem
- by issuing prevention guidance and catalyse the development of recommendations, and
- by encouraging actions to improve control and prevention.

**Focus audiences** are, in first instance, opinion leaders, policymakers, and health care professionals.
VHPB Structure

- **VHPB advisory board** is composed of independent experts in the field of viral hepatitis

- Honorary members

- Executive secretariat based at the VAXINFECTIO unit of the University of Antwerp
  - Emmy Engelen
  - Tinne Lernout
  - Greet Hendrickx
  - Alex Vorsters
  - Pierre Van Damme
# Composition of the advisors board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VHPB Advisors</th>
<th>Academic/University</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nedret Emiroglu</td>
<td>Selim Badur, Turkey</td>
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<td>WHO regional office for Europe, Denmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stefan Wiktor</td>
<td>Paolo Bonani, Italy</td>
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<td>WHO Headquarter, Switzerland</td>
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<td>ECDC</td>
<td>Angela Dominguez, Spain</td>
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<td>Marita Van de laar</td>
<td>Wolfgang Jilg, Germany</td>
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<td>ECDC, Sweden</td>
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<td>CDC</td>
<td>Helène Norder, Sweden</td>
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<td>John Ward</td>
<td>Vana Papaevangelou, Greece</td>
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<td>CDC, USA</td>
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<td>ELPA (European Liver patient association)</td>
<td>Françoise Roudot-Thoraval, France</td>
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<td>Tatjana Reic</td>
<td>Rui Tato Marinho, Portugal</td>
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<td>ELPA, Croatia</td>
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<td>Public health Institute</td>
<td>Daniel Shouval, Israel</td>
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<td>Hans Blystad</td>
<td>Koen Van Herck, Belgium</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<td>David Goldberg</td>
<td>Alessandro Zanetti, Italy</td>
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<td>Scotland</td>
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<td>Mira Kojouharova</td>
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<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<td>Johannes Hallauer</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Honorary Members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pietro Crovari</td>
<td>Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alain Goudeau</td>
<td>France</td>
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<td>Nicole Guérin</td>
<td>France</td>
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<td>Peter Grob</td>
<td>Swiss</td>
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<td>Mark Kane</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>Harold Margolis</td>
<td>Korea</td>
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<td>Steven Wiersma</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>Eric Mast</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>Elisabeth McCloy</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>André Meheus</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>Lars Rombo</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>Colette Roure</td>
<td>France</td>
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<td>Daniel Lavanchy</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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These honorary members are elected for a lifelong term and are invited to VHPB meetings on an ad hoc basis.
Support and Grants

- **unrestricted** grants from the vaccine industry GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals, Sanofi Pasteur MSD, Sanofi Pasteur, Crucell and Merck
- several universities and other institutions in Europe
- VHPB received in the past for their activities in CEE and NIS funds from GAVI fund, CVP at PATH, Unicef, CDC, WHO
VHPB ACTIVITIES
2-3 meetings/year
(technical - country)
VHPB Meetings

**Country** – March

- 2013: 14-15 March
  - Israel
- 2014: 20-21 March (TBC)
- 2015: 19-20 March (TBC)

**Technical** – November

- 2012: 15-16 Nov
  - How to reach Health Care Workers
- 2013: 14-15 Nov
- 2014: 13-14 Nov (TBC)
- 2015: 19-20 Nov (TBC)
Country meetings

- Italy 2002
- Germany and the Nordic Countries 2003
- France 2004
- UK 2005
- Spain 2006
- Greece 2007
- The Netherlands 2008
- Turkey 2009
- Portugal 2010
- Bulgaria 2011
- Arctic 2012
Publications

Viral hepatitis

- 2 issues/Year
- Distributed :
  - PDF on website
  - Mailing to ± 3600 readers

Editorial

This issue of Viral Hepatitis reports the topics covered at the VHPV's Country Meeting, held on November 18-19th, 2010 in Lisbon, Portugal.

The main objective of this report is to provide an overview of the current situation regarding prevention and control of viral hepatitis in Portugal. An overview is presented of the Portuguese health care system and of the revised national surveillance and notification system of infectious diseases, which include notifications for viral and other types of hepatitis. The epidemiological situation of viral hepatitis is reviewed. The treatment and follow-up strategies for patients with chronic hepatitis B (HBV) and chronic hepatitis C (HCV), including liver transplant patients, is also discussed. An evaluation of the economic aspect of viral hepatitis and liver disease is presented. Data are also presented for specific populations at risk, such as drug users, haemodialysis patients and pregnant women. An overview of current prevention and control measures is provided, including an assessment of the progress achieved in HBV prevention ten years after the introduction of universal HBV vaccinations, targeting newborns, adolescents and risk groups. The possible implementation of new prevention strategies, control measures and monitoring systems is discussed. The report also covers the discussions held during the meeting among participants, including national health authorities, addressing successes, challenges, and barriers that need to be overcome in order to clarify the way forward for an effective prevention and control strategy in Portugal.

Although Portugal has 40 national health programs, one is specifically focused on viral hepatitis. When the number of deaths due to hepatitis-related deaths (HCV) and liver diseases in HCV patients is included, liver disease is the 8th cause of death in Portugal. In light of this, the need for a comprehensive, coordinated strategy and a specific national public health programme for viral hepatitis is discussed in this report. In the prevention and control of viral hepatitis, there are many examples of excellence in Portugal. However, Public Health authorities should involve all specialist groups, including liver disease specialists. There is a need for a coordinating body that can coordinate the specialist groups and Health authorities. Public opinion also has an important part to play in this debate.

A new, improved electronic web-based health information system combining clinical and laboratory data, with automated bidimensional data transfer (monitoring and re-timing of data at higher level), has been developed and will be implemented in 2011.

Epidemiology of hepatitis A (HAV) has changed. An socioeconomic context has improved, Portugal has become a country of "autochthonous" HAV endemicity, with two-thirds of the younger population becoming susceptible to HAV infection. The making implementation of an adapted HAV vaccination policy is an important challenge.

Program has been achieved in HBV prevention 10 years after the successful introduction of universal HBV vaccinations. The examination coverage in newborns, infants and adolescents is high (>90%). The successful prevention and control strategies for HBV mean that Portugal is no longer a country of intermediate HBV prevalence, and results in the re-categorization as a country of low HBV prevalence, with frequencies of HBcAg carriers around 3%. HCV has an important role in mortality from liver diseases, and HCV has been increasing.

ECoDH, the HCV transmission and policy and lessons learned over 15 years.

The role of the European Transplant Programme (ETP) in the prevention of viral hepatitis.

Infection control measures for patients with liver disease.

International programs towards prevention and control of viral hepatitis.

Impact of the hepatitis B vaccination on the global health landscape.

The French example of national hepatitis programs.

Conclusions.

List of participants.

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Publications

Scientific publications

3 – 4 peer reviewed publications/ year
Web site www.vhpbo.org

- Web site
  - Overview of the VHPB
  - Shows all previous recommendations, guidelines and consensus statements
  - All *Viral Hepatitis* issues as of 1996 can be downloaded
  - Presentations of VHPB meetings are on-line since 2001 (>374 presentations of in total >471 documents)
  - Formally approved by WHO Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety
VHPB news

VHPB endorses the first official World Hepatitis Day (28 July) of the World Health Organization (WHO).

In May 2010 the World Health Assembly adopted the viral hepatitis resolution WHA 63.18, calling for an official WHO sponsored World Hepatitis Day. From now on this WHO sponsored World Hepatitis Day will take place Thursday 28th of July, Professor Baruch Blumberg’s birthday. This date is very appropriate to put viral hepatitis in the spot light as Professor Blumberg received in 1972 a shared Nobel Prize for his research leading to the discovery of the hepatitis B virus and allowing the development of the hepatitis B vaccine.

The World Hepatitis Day provides the opportunity to increase the awareness, understanding and prevention of viral hepatitis and its related diseases in all WHO member states. With more than 20 years’ experience in increasing awareness of viral hepatitis among healthcare workers, policymakers and opinion leaders, the VHPB recognizes the importance and relevance of this initiative and fully supports the overall objectives of the World Hepatitis Day. We hope that the campaign “Hepatitis affects everyone, everywhere. Know it. Confront it. Protect yourself.” will have a major global impact on the general awareness of Viral Hepatitis.

More information and promotional material in different languages is accessible on www.worldhepatitisday.info
Involvement in other meetings

- ECDC Technical Expert group
- ETAGE (European Technical Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization)
- SAGE (Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization)
- Input in the scientific content of the “Summit Conference on Hepatitis B and C in the Mediterranean and Balkan countries” in Nicosia, Cyprus in December 2012
- Other scientific meetings
VHPB History

- Since 1992, 20 years of experience
- 37 issues of Viral Hepatitis
- Meetings: 37 VHPB meetings, 3 EE/NIS meetings, 1 global HAV meeting
- Board members: 35 representing 17 different countries
- Peer reviewed publications: more than 80
How to reach healthcare workers?
Meeting Objectives

• To review recent vaccination coverage data of hepatitis B and other vaccine preventable diseases in healthcare workers.
• To review vaccination policies and recommendations in healthcare workers on national and global level
• To evaluate how policies are implemented and organized
• To examine the acceptance of vaccination by healthcare workers
• To review and learn from examples of best practices for increasing vaccination rates among health care workers