

During 2017-2019 ICF «Alliance for Public Health» was one of the key implementers of the Demonstration Project on Assessment of Simplified Antiviral Treatment Strategy for Hepatitis C. The Project was implemented in partnership with EQUIP and USAID, PEPFAR financial support.

Purpose of the Project were:

- To improve access to HCV treatment among key populations in Ukraine (people who inject drugs, commercial sex worker, men who have sex with men), and enhance ART initiation and adherence in HIV/HCV co-infected persons.
- To develop, implement and evaluate cost and treatment outcomes of a simplified HCV testing, treatment and care model integrated with HIV testing and treatment among key affected populations in Ukraine.

Within this Project representatives of key populations were screened for HCV and HIV and treated with directly acting anti-HCV agents and referred for anti-retroviral drugs (HIV/HCV co-infected).

Representatives of key populations enrolled for HCV treatment had received social peer support and were further linked to HIV care and treatment, harm reduction services (e.g. access to needle, syringes exchange program, opioid substitution treatment).

Patients' selection criteria:

1. Persons from key population groups and their partners: people who inject drugs (PWID), medication assisted treatment (MAT) participants, Commercial Sex Workers (CSW) or men having sex with men (MSM)
2. Patients treated with pegylated interferon and with/without ribavirin previously (patients without previous experience of treatment with DAAs)
3. Men and women age 18+ years
4. Chronic HCV infection laboratory confirmed
5. HCV mono infected or co-infected HIV/HCV
6. Genotypes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6.

Participants with compensated cirrhosis or Hepatitis B were as well eligible to participate in this Project. Patients with decompensated liver cirrhosis or prior HCV treatment with DAAs were not eligible.

Treatment regimen administered:

Fixed-dose combination of sofosbuvir/ledipasvir (SOF/LDV 400mg/90mg) for 12 weeks with/without ribavirin at doctor's solution.

Duration of treatment:

24 weeks [12 weeks on treatment, 12 weeks post-treatment period].

Screening, testing, laboratory diagnostics, treatment of HCV and social support were granted to patients in two health care facilities - Institute of Epidemiology and Infectious Diseases named after L. Gromashevskiy and Kyiv City Hospital # 5.

Alliance organised and supervised screening, diagnostics, treatment and social support of patients in the Clinic of the Institute of Epidemiology and Infectious Diseases. Meanwhile Charitable organization "100% Life" coordinated the same activities in Kyiv City Hospital # 5. This Project was implemented in close partnership with Public Health Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine that was in charge of research progress monitoring and analytics.

Among the key Alliance responsibilities under the Project were procurement and supply of medicines, laboratory equipment, consumables, medical items, laboratory services, etc. for both

health facilities involved in the treatment within the Project. Apart of HCV treatment considerable amount of research routine was performed to evaluate HCV diagnostics and treatment model cost effectiveness.

Totally 434 patients (99% of them PWID and their partners) were treated for Hep C in the Clinic of the Institute of Epidemiology and Infectious Diseases under Alliance supervision. For 48 Clinic patients HIV was first diagnosed, all of them started ART in the Project.

Simplified model of HCV diagnostic, applied in the Project as well as case managers efforts evidenced to be effective – 99% of Project patients completed full course of treatment and appeared for treatment effectiveness evaluation testing. 99% of patients were successfully cared.

