

## Art and viral hepatitis elimination programmes

Maryam Nima<sup>1,2</sup>, Hamidreza Karimi-Sari<sup>1,2,3</sup> and Seyed Moayed Alavian<sup>1,2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Baqiyatallah Research Center for Gastroenterology and Liver Diseases (BRCGL), Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

<sup>2</sup> Iran Hepatitis Network, Tehran, Iran

<sup>3</sup> Student Research Committee, Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

### Abstract

The elimination viral hepatitis requires increased awareness of the viruses that cause it by the general population. To this end, the Iran Hepatitis Network held the First Drawing and Illustration Contest with the theme of eliminating hepatitis. We suggest that artwork provided by the general public could have a role in campaigns promoting hepatitis elimination.

Keywords: hepatitis, art, Iran

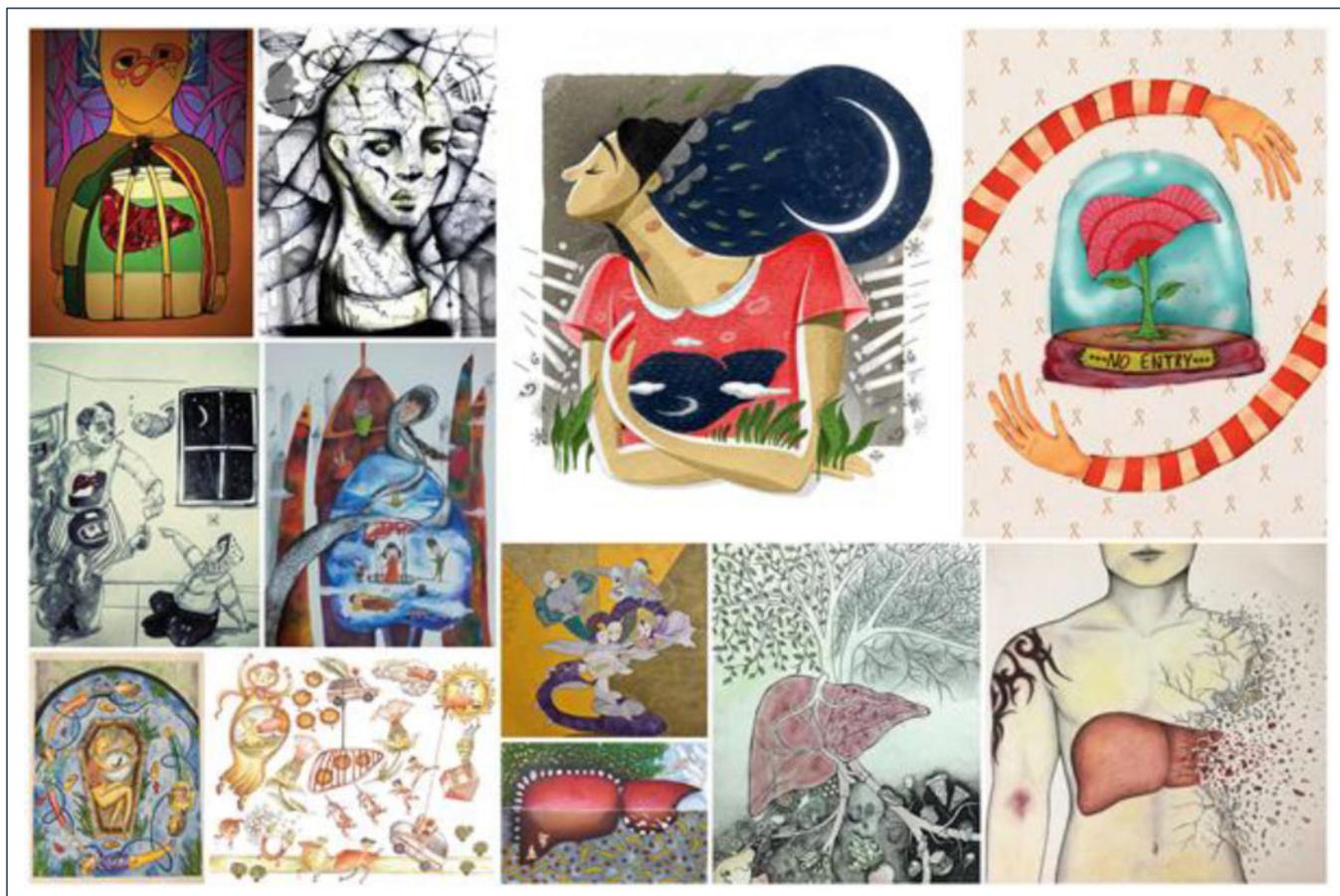
### Introduction

Viral hepatitis represents an important health issue that affects millions of people annually and leads to substantial morbidity and mortality. The most common viruses associated with liver failure and death are hepatitis B (HBV) and C (HCV) with a global prevalence of 4% [1] and 1% [2], respectively.

Fortunately, there is a prophylactic vaccine for HBV and more recently, an effective treatment has been developed for HCV, both important tools in the fight against these two viruses. The World Health Organization has set the goal for viral hepatitis elimination by 2030, which requires increased awareness of these viruses by the general population in order to achieve it [3]. Therefore, it is

vital that people should be better informed of the importance of viral hepatitis, its transmission routes and the risk factors for its acquisition in order for individuals to come forward for testing, diagnosis and treatment. This in turn should decrease onward transmission, as well as beliefs wrongly associated with viral hepatitis and its stigmatisation, which are obstacles to elimination programmes.

The World Hepatitis Alliance has initiated the NOhep global movement in order to increase the general awareness about viral hepatitis to help reach the goal of viral hepatitis elimination. The Iran Hepatitis Network, as a member of this alliance, has made many efforts to try to spread a positive message in Iran.



**Figure 1.** Twelve artworks exhibited in the art gallery of 7<sup>th</sup> Tehran Hepatitis Conference. By: Meisam Shaikh, Arghavan OstadHosein, Mahsa Nouralizadeh, Zahra Ziaie, Sanaz Daemi Langerodi, Peyman Ghasemi, Malihe Pasandideh, Fateme Behzadi, Elham Khezri, Maedeh Ghorbani, Shahla Khosroanjom, and Shamim Karimi.

\*Corresponding author: Professor Seyed Moayed Alavian, Baqiyatallah Research Center for Gastroenterology and Liver Diseases (BRCGL), Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran  
Email: alavian@thc.ir

As art can have an important impact on the general population, we thought it appropriate as a tool to increase hepatitis awareness and facilitate its eradication. The Iran Hepatitis Network held the First Drawing and Illustration Contest with the theme of eliminating hepatitis in order to take more effective steps to create a culture of hepatitis awareness. After its announcement, approximately 100 drawings and illustrations were received from the general population in Iran. An initial review selected 81 and after a second review, 40 were chosen for publication in the booklet of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Tehran Hepatitis Conference (THC7). Twelve artworks (Figure 1) were exhibited in the art gallery of THC7 and three were awarded a prize at the THC7 closing ceremony by renowned scientists in the field of gastroenterology and hepatology.

Thus, we suggest that artwork provided by the general public could have a role in campaigns promoting hepatitis elimination.

## Acknowledgements

Professor Seyed Moayed Alavian is the Director of the Iran Hepatitis Network, and Maryam Nima is Director of the First Drawing and Illustration Contest with the theme of hepatitis elimination.

## References

1. Schweitzer A, Horn J, Mikolajczyk RT *et al*. Estimations of worldwide prevalence of chronic hepatitis B virus infection: a systematic review of data published between 1965 and 2013. *Lancet* 2015; **386**: 1546–1555.
2. Polaris Observatory HCV Collaborators. Global prevalence and genotype distribution of hepatitis C virus infection in 2015: a modelling study. *Lancet Gastroenterol Hepatol* 2017; **2**: 161–176.
3. Karimi-Sari H, Tajik M, Bayatpoor ME, Alavian SM. Increasing the awareness of the general population: an important step in elimination programs of viral hepatitis. *Am J Gastroenterol* 2017; **112**: 393–395.