

ILBS Delhi organizes discussion on silent epidemic 'Hepatitis'

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July 28th every year has been designated as World Hepatitis Day by World Health Organization to focus global attention on the looming Hepatitis Epidemic. A day before on July 27, 2015, the National Liver Foundation and its partners held a discussion and media round-table on Viral Hepatitis B and C in India at New Delhi.

Dr Shiv Sarin, director, Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences, New Delhi opened the discussion "Addressing Viral Hepatitis - A Challenge for India, Much needs to be done to address this silent epidemic." with a reminder that Hepatitis B & C infections are easily transmitted, particularly in health care settings, but with vaccines for Hepatitis B and treatment for Hepatitis C now available, the opportunity was ripe to take bold steps to control the problem of Hepatitis.

He added: "We today have a very effective vaccine to prevent Hepatitis B. Every child should be protected at birth with this vaccine. Similarly, infection control and safe injection practices will ensure that no more transmission on Hepatitis B or C takes place in health care settings. For those with Hepatitis C, new drugs today bring hope for complete cure. We need to make sure that treatment is made accessible to all those who need it."

Ms Bhavna Visharia, a social activist from Mumbai, was a regular blood donor and organizer of blood donation camps. When it was found during her 17th donation that she had Hepatitis C, her situation changed dramatically. Today, she is healthy. She said: "The system of blood donation can save lives; it should be kept that way. We should ensure that life saving processes like blood donation and getting injections do not create a larger problem like Hepatitis for individuals and the society."

Speaking in conclusion, Dr Samir Shah, Founder and Hon. General Secretary of National Liver Foundation called attention to the growing numbers of people contracting Hepatitis B & C infections in India: "We need to get a handle on the Hepatitis Epidemic in India. A concerted national Hepatitis Control program needs to be launched at the earliest possible. We call on all state governments and our national leadership to take urgent actions."