The Hepatitis C Elimination through Access to Diagnostics (HEAD-Start)* project in Delhi, India aims to enhance hepatitis C diagnosis and treatment pathways by introducing a simplified and near-patient diagnostic and care pathway starting from screening to sustained virologic response (SVR), within public health settings. It specifically highlights that access to hepatitis C virus (HCV) screening tests, confirmatory tests, treatment and SVR tests is possible under one roof.

In Delhi, HEAD-Start has introduced decentralized HCV screening by incorporating rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) using the method of whole blood finger prick test (WBFP) in 15 polyclinics (primary health care centres) and 5 hospitals (secondary care centres).

The video will take you on HEAD-Start’s hepatitis C diagnosis pathway in Delhi. At the polyclinics, patients found to be HCV antibody positive (Ab+) are referred to one of the 5 participating hospitals. At these 5 hospitals, a blood sample is collected from HCV Ab+ patients and transported to the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) for an HCV RNA or confirmatory test. Results of the RNA test are communicated electronically to hospitals. Patients who are HCV RNA+ are initiated on direct-acting antivirals (DAAs) for treatment of hepatitis C infection. Patients who are found to have cirrhosis or other complications are referred to ILBS for further evaluation and management.

"I received free hepatitis C diagnosis and treatment. They first took blood from my finger and then from my arm. After my diagnosis was confirmed, in 2-3 days my treatment was started. I’ve come to collect my last dose of medicines. I am feeling a lot better. I have started eating well again.”

– Lata

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Video creation: Urmila Jagganathan

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