

Romulus Breban

UNITÉ D'ÉPIDÉMIOLOGIE DES MALADIES ÉMERGENTES,
INSTITUT PASTEUR, 75724 PARIS CEDEX 15, FRANCE
e-mail: romulus.breban@pasteur.fr

The nationwide incidence of hepatitis C in Egypt: Toward realistic estimates

Recently, the nationwide incidence of hepatitis C in Egypt has attracted much attention both in the scientific literature and mass media. Alarming new estimates exceeding 500 000 new cases per year (6.9/1000 per person-year) have been made based on data originating from the Egyptian Demographic and Health Survey performed in 2008. However, a more complete analysis of the hepatitis C epidemiology in Egypt, based on additional national-level as well as cohort-level data, reveals a very different story. First, it unveils a complex epidemic dynamics that violates the simplistic methodological assumptions made for the incidence estimates; it thus becomes obvious that incidence has been overestimated. Second, a comparison with direct incidence measurements in rural cohorts suggests that the overestimation is by at least a factor of three. Accurate estimate of the hepatitis C incidence in Egypt remains a task for the future.

REFERENCES

- [1] F.D. Miller, L.J. Abu-Raddad *Evidence of intense ongoing endemic transmission of hepatitis C virus in Egypt* Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A **107** 14757-14762, 2010.
- [2] E.M. Lehman, M.L. Wilson *Epidemic hepatitis C virus infection in Egypt: estimates of past incidence and future morbidity and mortality* J Vir Hep **16** 650-658, 2009.
- [3] C. Frank C, M.K. Mohamed, G.T. Strickland, D. Lavanchy, R. Arthur, L.S. Magder, T. Khoby, Y. Abdel-Wahab, E. Ohn, W. Anwar, I. Sallam *The role of parenteral antischistosomal therapy in the spread of hepatitis C virus in Egypt* Lancet **355** 887-891, 2000.
- [4] A. Mostafa, S. Taylor, M. El-Daly, M. El Hoseiny, I. Bakr, N. Arafa, V. Thiers, F. Rimlinger, M. Abdel-Hamid, A. Fontanet, M.K. Mohamed *Is the hepatitis C virus epidemic over in Egypt? Incidence and risk factors of new hepatitis C virus infections* Liver Int **30** 560-566, 2010.