

## 19. KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND PRACTICES REGARDING HEPATITIS B AND C AMONG STUDENTS AT "NICOLAE TESTEMIȚANU" STATE UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND PHARMACY



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**Introduction.** Viral hepatitis B and C represent significant global public health challenges with a profound impact on the population. Students at the "*Nicolae Testemitanu*" State University of Medicine and Pharmacy (USMF) are future medical professionals who will play a crucial role in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of these conditions. In this context, emphasizing the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of students regarding viral hepatitis B and C becomes essential for developing effective educational programs and awareness strategies.

**Aim of study.** The aim of this study is to assess the level of knowledge, attitudes, and practices among USMF students regarding viral hepatitis B and C, identifying potential gaps and providing a foundation for improving education and awareness in the field.

**Methods and materials.** To achieve the stated objective, a cross-sectional study was conducted using a structured questionnaire randomly distributed to USMF students from years 1 to 6. The questionnaire included questions about basic knowledge of hepatitis B and C, attitudes towards affected patients, and practices related to hepatitis prevention and control. Data were collected and analyzed using statistical methods, Microsoft Excel, and EpiInfo.

**Results.** A total of 152 students were surveyed. The cause of infection with hepatitis B and C was correctly mentioned by 93.4% and 92.1%, respectively, while others cited bacteria or drugs. 82.9% believe that HBV can be prevented through vaccination, 48.7% believe that HCV can be prevented through vaccination, 56.6% believe that HBV can be treated, and 51.3% believe that HCV can be treated. 96.1% and 94.1%, respectively, consider blood and amniotic fluid to pose a risk of infection with viral hepatitis B and C. 21.7%-25.0% consider urine to be a way of transmission, 36.2%-34.2% consider hepatitis B and C can be transmitted through saliva. 47.4% of respondents believe that HBV can be transmitted through breast milk, while 44.1% mentioned HCV. 65.1% believe that HBV can be transmitted from mother to fetus during pregnancy, and 60.5% mentioned HCV. 85.5% believe that HBV can be transmitted sexually, and 80.3% believe the same for HCV.

**Conclusion.** The study highlights the urgent need to improve the education level and awareness of USMF students regarding viral hepatitis B and C. The implementation of training programs, along with the promotion of non-stigmatizing attitudes and effective prevention practices, represents critical directions for the future. Active involvement of faculty and educational authorities is essential to ensure the proper training of future medical professionals.