

# Basic guidelines for promotion of control measures for hepatitis

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Hepatitis is a medical condition characterized by liver cell damage. There are a variety of causes of hepatitis, which can be broadly classified into viruses, alcohol and autoimmune. In Japan, a large percentage of cases of hepatitis are caused by the hepatitis B or hepatitis C virus infection (hereinafter referred to as the hepatitis virus), therefore, measures to prevent hepatitis B and C are urgently needed.

With regard to recent measures for hepatitis B and C in Japan, comprehensive urgent measures against hepatitis C were implemented in the 2002 fiscal year and after. Subsequently, in the 2007 fiscal year, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) requested that the prefectural governments prepare linked regional core centers for the treatment of liver disease (hereinafter referred to as regional core centers).

The MHLW has been promoting comprehensive control measures for hepatitis, consisting of 5 strategies, since the 2008 fiscal year. These five measures are as follows: environmental improvement to enhance hepatitis treatment, facilitation of hepatitis testing, preparation of a treatment/consultation system for hepatitis, preparation and dissemination of accurate information to the public, and promotion of hepatitis-related research.

Furthermore, the Hepatitis Treatment Strategy Council consisting of experts in hepatitis developed the "7-year Strategy for Hepatitis Research" in June 2008 and has been promoting research based on this strategy.

However, it is likely that a large proportion of individuals are unaware that they are infected with the hepatitis virus, and some regions do not have a sufficient system for the treatment of hepatitis virus-induced hepatitis, cirrhosis or liver cancer. (hereinafter referred to as hepatitis treatment). Therefore, there are many problems to be solved in order to provide appropriate treatment to patients with hepatitis. In addition, many people fail to fully understand the infection route of the hepatitis virus, and are not fully aware of the need for hepatitis testing. This lack of understanding results in many patients with chronic viral hepatitis (including patients with cirrhosis or liver cancer as a result of viral hepatitis (hereinafter referred to as patients with hepatitis)) experiencing unjustified discrimination. To improve understanding and

promote control measures for hepatitis, at a national as well as local government level, all relevant parties need to work together and establish further collaborations.

These guidelines are developed on the basis of the provisions of Article 9, Paragraph 1 of the Basic Act on Hepatitis Measures (Act No. 97, 2009) in order to promote control measures for hepatitis and to produce an environment that allows early detection and stable treatment of patients with hepatitis, and to propose an approach to be taken by national and local governments.

In Japan, the establishment of control measures for hepatitis B and C is currently an urgent task because patients with hepatitis caused by the hepatitis B or C virus account for a large percentage of patients with hepatitis. Therefore, these guidelines outline a number of control measures for hepatitis B and C.

## **Chapter 1 Basic approach for preventing hepatitis and promoting medical care of hepatitis**

### **(1) Basic concept**

Hepatitis (Hepatitis B and C) is likely to become a chronic disease if not appropriately treated and often results in progression to more serious diseases such as cirrhosis or liver cancer. Therefore, it is necessary to take measures against hepatitis to ensure all individuals involved in dealing with patients with hepatitis to fully understand the disease, and to develop an environment in which patients with hepatitis can be fully integrated with other members of society.

Measures for hepatitis should be approached from the standpoint of the general public by all relevant parties, including patients with hepatitis, with the understanding and cooperation of the general public.

### **(2) Further promotion of hepatitis test**

The route of infection of the hepatitis virus varies and it is difficult to determine which individuals may possibly be infected. Therefore, everyone should undergo hepatitis testing at least once. Consequently, it is necessary to prepare a system for hepatitis testing and recommend that everyone should undergo a hepatitis test.

### **(3) Development of appropriate hepatitis treatment**

Appropriate treatment consistent with individual conditions is necessary to promote and maintain the health of patients with hepatitis.

Expertise and experience are required to provide hepatitis treatment that is appropriate to the pathological conditions of each patient. Therefore, it is recommended that treatment strategies be developed for individual patients with hepatitis in institutions that specialize in hepatitis treatment (hereinafter referred to as specialized institutions). Such patients receiving individualized treatment regimens as developed by these specialized institutions should then continue to receive appropriate treatment.

Therefore, actions to develop a system for the treatment of liver disease, taking local characteristics into consideration, are required to provide appropriate treatment of liver disease to patients with hepatitis, regardless of residential area.

Antiviral therapy to eliminate the hepatitis virus or inhibit viral replication (interferon treatment for complete cure of hepatitis, or treatment of hepatitis B with nucleic acid analog

preparations, hereinafter referred to as antiviral therapy) prevents or delays progression to more serious diseases such as cirrhosis or liver cancer, and prevents secondary infection due to decreased viral load. Therefore, it is necessary to provide financial assistance for antiviral therapy and for validation of its effectiveness.

(4) Comprehensive promotion of research for hepatitis treatment

Hepatitis is the most prevalent disease in Japan, and results in progression to serious diseases such as cirrhosis and liver cancer if left untreated. Therefore, it is necessary to undertake comprehensive basic, clinical and epidemiological studies of hepatitis to improve levels of hepatitis treatment.

In addition, there are a number of administrative problems that need to be solved in order to support reduction in the costs associated with hepatitis and to allow comprehensive promotion of control measures for hepatitis.

(5) Further preparation and dissemination of accurate information about hepatitis

The hepatitis virus causes few subjective symptoms, consequently, infection with the hepatitis virus is unlikely to be recognized by the patient. Infected persons often fail to fully understand the necessity of urgent treatment, even if they are aware of infection. Therefore, further preparation and dissemination of accurate information regarding hepatitis is required for the general public, as well as testing for hepatitis infection.

In addition, accurate information regarding hepatitis is necessary to eliminate unjustified discrimination against patients with hepatitis, and to prevent new infections due to lack of information about the route of infection.

(6) Support for and consultation with hepatitis patients and their families and improvement of information provision

Many patients with hepatitis and their families are concerned about the progression of hepatitis to more serious diseases such as cirrhosis and liver cancer. They are often also worried about adverse reactions before and during treatment. Therefore, consultation with patients with hepatitis and their families should be supported in order to relieve their anxiety.

In addition, it is necessary to develop measures for the provision of patient-friendly information from the standpoint of the general population, including patients with hepatitis.

## **Chapter 2 Measures for preventing hepatitis**

(1) Policies to be developed

Dissemination of accurate information to the general population regarding hepatitis is necessary in order to prevent new infection due to lack of information about the route of infection.

The national government has already undertaken a number of preventive measures for maternal-fetal transmission of hepatitis B. More specifically, medical institutions are required to perform measures such as hepatitis B vaccination in infants whose mothers test positive for hepatitis, and local governments have been directed to perform a hepatitis B antigen test for pregnant women as part of the standard tests.

Furthermore, hepatitis B infection is preventable by vaccination, and systems for

vaccination against hepatitis B should be considered as a preventive measure against horizontal transmission.

(2) Issues to be considered

- a) The national government shall promote research aimed at development of materials for dissemination of recommendations for infection control in daily life, and guidelines for infection control in group living facilities in order to prevent new infection with hepatitis virus. The national government shall cooperate with local governments using results of relevant research, and shall provide and disseminate information regarding hepatitis.
- b) The national government shall develop information to be provided to youth likely to participate in activities that put them at risk of infection (such as activities that involve exposure to blood or bodily fluids, including piercings and sexual activity). Having accurate knowledge regarding hepatitis is necessary for youth to understand the risk, and will require cooperation with local governments for the provision and dissemination of such information.
- c) The national and local governments shall provide information regarding the efficacy and safety of the hepatitis B vaccine, mainly to populations at high risk for infection such as health care workers.
- d) The national government shall consider the development of a system for vaccination with the relevant vaccine based on information about efficacy and safety of hepatitis B vaccination as a preventive measure against horizontal transmission.

### **Chapter 3 Implementation system for hepatitis testing and improvement in test performance**

(1) Policies to be developed

There are various parties involved in performing hepatitis testing, including health care insurers and business operators, which conducts hepatitis test in individuals to inform them of conditions of infection to hepatitis virus, and the test is sometimes conducted anonymously due to privacy considerations. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the full extent of such testing. However, such measures are required to effectively develop systems for hepatitis testing and to provide and disseminate information regarding hepatitis. While there has been previous surveys conducted to determine the number of individuals undergoing hepatitis testing, new surveys and further research are required to determine the true extent of hepatitis testing at the current time.

Many patients with hepatitis do not know that they are infected because they have not undergone testing. Moreover, even those that have undergone such testing may fail to understand their test results. Therefore, preparation and dissemination of appropriate information about hepatitis, including various routes of infection and the possibility of individuals being unaware of their infection status, will be implemented to inform all members of the population of the necessity of undergoing hepatitis testing at least once. It is necessary to develop a system in which all members of the population who want to undergo hepatitis testing are able to do so, and to promote research to validate the effect of such testing.

Furthermore, it is necessary to provide information about hepatitis to examinees to ensure that all those tested understand their hepatitis test results, and all health care workers

involved in hepatitis treatment should be provided with the opportunity to receive training to ensure they have up-to-date knowledge regarding hepatitis testing.

(2) Issues to be considered

- a) The national government shall conduct surveys and research to determine the proportion of the population currently undergoing hepatitis testing and receiving follow-up visits.
- b) The national government shall request that local governments conduct hepatitis testing as is currently their responsibility, and that they improve the current system. Furthermore, the national government shall provide support to local governments to allow hepatitis testing to be conducted more frequently and shall promote mobile health checkup service.
- c) The national and local governments shall enhance public relations regarding hepatitis testing. National and local government shall request the relevant parties, including personnel in charge of health care at work sites, health care insurers and business operators, to continuously recommend hepatitis testing to workers in cooperation with other relevant parties.
- d) The national government shall request that health care insurers and business operators implement hepatitis testing simultaneously with health checks by health care insurers based on the provisions of the Health Insurance Act (Act No. 70, 1922) and with medical examinations by business operators based on the provisions of the Industrial Safety and Health Act (Act No. 57,1972) in order to confirm various test chances. The national government shall again inform health care insurers and business operators of the appropriate procedures required for notification and handling of hepatitis test results, taking into account privacy considerations.
- e) The national government shall collect information about hepatic disease conditions, treatment and prevention, in cooperation with local governments, to disseminate to each individual examinee to ensure they are able to have correct understanding on hepatic disease conditions, treatment and prevention prior to hepatitis testing and when receiving the results..
- f) The national and local governments shall request that medical institutions provide appropriately detailed explanations of possible hepatitis test results to examinees before operation. The national government shall conduct surveys and research into explanations of hepatitis test results before operation by medical institutions in order to characterize test conditions.
- g) The national government shall request that the Hepatitis Information Center, National Center for Global Health and Medicine (hereinafter referred to as the Hepatitis Information Center) conducts training for hepatitis testing and treatment, based on the latest information and knowledge, for health care workers who are supervisors in regional core centers, based on the midterm goal and plan of the National Center for Global Health and Medicine.

**Chapter 4 Confirmation of the system for providing medical care for hepatitis**

(1) Policies to be developed

In some cases, individuals who require treatment after testing positive for hepatitis fail to

present for such treatment at medical institutions. Moreover, individuals who test positive for hepatitis do not always receive appropriate hepatitis treatment even after presenting at medical institutions. Therefore, it is necessary for core centers to develop a regional network for hepatitis treatment, where core centers, specialized institutions and primary physicians cooperate with each other in accordance with the "Guidelines for the system for treatment of liver disease after hepatitis test in local regions" (Report of National Conference of Hepatitis C in 2007), to develop a system that ensures all patients with hepatitis receive appropriate and continuous treatment. It is also necessary for the relevant parties, including personnel in charge of health care in the community and at work sites, to cooperate with each other and recommend that patients with hepatitis visit appropriate medical institutions, by implementing recommendations for such visits and for follow-up after hepatitis testing in patients testing positive for hepatitis.

It is important to establish procedures for environments in which patients with hepatitis receive treatment while working, in order to secure the cooperation of relevant parties, including business operators, personnel in charge of health care in the community and at work sites and labor unions.

Furthermore, early and appropriate treatment of hepatitis shall be promoted by providing financial support for medical expenses such as antiviral therapy to reduce the economic burden on patients, as well as financial support for the development and dissemination of information for the general public regarding the various systems related to hepatitis treatment.

## (2) Issues to be considered

- a) The national government shall enhance education of support personnel involved in the community and work sites, including follow-up after hepatitis testing and recommendations for treatment, in order to provide hepatitis treatment appropriate for the pathological condition of individual patients with hepatitis in cooperation with local governments. The national government shall deliver booklets, etc. providing information on topics such as hepatitis disease conditions, treatment and systems related to hepatitis treatment in order to support information provision to patients with hepatitis, and cooperation between core centers, specialized institutions and primary physicians.
- b) The national government shall collect information necessary for personnel in charge of health care in the community and at work sites to provide to patients with hepatitis, and shall cooperate with local governments and health care insurers to disseminate such information.
- c) The national government shall provide technical support for the Hepatitis Information Center to conduct effective training of medical staff in core centers. The national and prefectural governments shall discuss more effective training methods to be used by core centers and improve the content of such training.
- d) The national government shall conduct research to promote linkage of clinical practice between regions, and shall utilize the results to support enhancement of the current system for liaising with different regions for clinical practice, taking local characteristics into consideration.
- e) The national government shall collect information about hepatitis disease conditions,

treatment and [advanced examples of desirable considerations] about patients with hepatitis in order to understand the actual condition of patients with hepatitis in work sites, and shall cooperate with business operator organizations to conduct dissemination of information about hepatitis.

- f) The national government shall request that business operator organizations cooperate to develop a system to provide appropriate hepatitis treatment to patients as well as to maintain an appropriate work environment.
- g) The national government shall collect information about systems related to hepatitis treatment including systems for providing support for the medical expenses associated with hepatitis, expensive health insurances, the injury and disease allowance and the disability pension, and shall cooperate with local governments to promote the role of core centers as medical institutions including the liver disease information center.
- h) The Hepatitis Information Center shall collect the latest information regarding hepatitis treatment, a list of core centers and specialized institutions, and information about hepatitis treatment available in core centers, and shall post the relevant information on the website of the Hepatitis Information Center in an easy-to-understand manner in order to inform health care workers and the general public as soon as possible.

## **Chapter 5 Education of personnel involved in prevention and treatment of hepatitis**

### **(1) Policies to be developed**

The education of personnel involved in the prevention and treatment of hepatitis is important to prevent new infections and to improve the level of hepatitis treatment. Therefore, it is necessary to further educate those who have knowledge of hepatitis infection control and those likely to direct individuals with hepatitis to appropriate treatment after infection is detected, in order to support activities to prevent new infections.

Access to the most recent information and knowledge regarding the latest hepatitis test is very important for personnel involved in hepatitis treatment, to enable them to determine the most appropriate treatment strategies and to provide appropriate explanations to patients, therefore, personnel involved in hepatitis treatment should improve their learning performance and broaden their information resources.

Furthermore, it is also important to educate supervisors who support improvement in the level of hepatitis treatment in regions.

### **(2) Issues to be considered**

- a) The national government shall promote research to develop materials for dissemination of recommendations for infection control in daily life, and guidelines for infection control in facilities for group living, in order to prevent new hepatitis virus infections. The national government shall cooperate with local governments using results of the relevant research and shall disseminate information about hepatitis. (Repeat)
- b) The national government shall enhance the education of personnel involved in providing support in the community and at work sites, including follow-up after hepatitis testing and recommendation of treatment in order to provide hepatitis treatment appropriate to the pathological condition of patients with hepatitis in cooperation with local governments. (Repeat)

- c) The national government shall request that the Hepatitis Information Center conduct training of health care workers who are supervisors in regional core centers, based on the midterm goal and plan of the National Center for Global Health and Medicine, for hepatitis testing and for treatment based on the latest information and knowledge. (Repeat)
- d) The national government shall provide technical support for the Hepatitis Information Center to conduct effective training of medical staff in core centers. The national and prefectural governments shall discuss more effective training methods used by core centers and improve the content of training. (Repeat)

## **Chapter 6 Surveys and Research regarding hepatitis**

### **(1) Policies to be developed**

With regard to hepatitis research, the national government shall thoroughly evaluate and validate research results to determine whether current measures in place for hepatitis are adequate, and will conduct research as necessary to resolve any administrative problems arising in the future.

In addition, the national government shall promote hepatitis research that addresses comprehensive promotion of control measures for hepatitis and shall educate young researchers who will lead hepatitis research in the future, in order to enhance human resources for hepatitis research.

Furthermore, it is necessary to promote transmission of information in an easy-to-understand manner in order to ensure the general public is able to understand hepatitis research. The research results shall be published with the aim of preventing prejudice and discrimination.

### **(2) Issues to be considered**

- a) The national government shall promote hepatitis research based on the "7-year Strategy for Hepatitis Research", evaluate and validate research results and report these to the Council for Promotion of Hepatitis Measures.
- b) The national government shall proactively encourage education?] for young researchers in the field of hepatitis research.
- c) The national government shall conduct the following administrative research for promotion of hepatitis measures in addition to hepatitis research based on the "7-year Strategy for Hepatitis Research".
  - i. Research to develop materials for dissemination of recommendations for infection control in daily life and guidelines for infection control in group living facilities.
  - ii. Research to [identify] current test conditions in terms of explanations provided to patients prior to undergoing hepatitis testing results before operation by medical institutions
  - iii. Research to promote linkage of clinical practice in different regions
  - iv. Research on desirable consideration for patients with hepatitis at work sites
  - v. Surveys and research to determine actual conditions of hepatitis, cirrhosis and liver cancer in terms of pathology, in order to support goal setting for practical measures
  - vi. Research to determine the actual nature and extent of prejudice and discrimination that



exists against patients with hepatitis and to develop guidelines for the prevention of such prejudice and discrimination

vii. Research to support promotion of other measures against hepatitis

d) The national government shall publish results of the relevant research in an easy-to-understand manner and shall inform the public of the research results in order to ensure people are able to understand hepatitis research.

## **Chapter 7 Pharmaceutical research and development for the treatment of hepatitis**

### **(1) Policies to be developed**

Hepatitis is serious disease and it is necessary to promote research involving drug development, including drugs related to hepatitis treatment, and to promote trials and clinical studies for prompt marketing approval in compliance with the provisions of the Pharmaceutical Affairs Act (Act No. 145, 1960). It is also important that further appropriate measures be taken to promote drug development, such as a review of the possibility of expediting approval to allow for rapid introduction of much-needed drugs including those for hepatitis and medical devices.

### **(2) Issues to be considered**

a) The national government shall promote research related to new drug development contributing to improvement of levels of hepatitis treatment.

b) The national government shall promote trials and clinical studies of drug development including new drugs related to hepatitis treatment.

c) The national government shall promote actions to expedite the review of drug applications and improve the review quality, such as improvement and enhancement of review systems of efficacy and safety in order to rapidly provide new drugs and medical devices for hepatitis treatment to clinical practice.

d) The national government shall make requests to the relevant companies for implementation of trials of much-needed new drugs for hepatitis that are already approved in Europe and the United States but not in Japan.

e) The national government shall give priority to the approval review for drugs meeting the requirements for treatment utility among new drugs related to hepatitis treatment.

## **Chapter 8 Dissemination of information regarding hepatitis and respect for human rights of patients with hepatitis**

### **(1) Policies to be developed**

Currently, many members of the population do not possess accurate knowledge regarding hepatitis. Therefore, to be able to recommend hepatitis testing and prevent new infections, it is necessary to disseminate information to educate the population regarding promote enlightenment and dissemination and information provision for all citizens to accurately understand hepatitis prevention, disease and treatment. Patients with hepatitis also lack understanding and need to be provided with information to enable them to develop an accurate understanding of their disease and its treatment, particularly in the early stages of the disease. Such education of both patients and the general population, particularly patient's families, health care workers and business operators, would improve the lives of those with

hepatitis in terms of reducing unjustified discrimination.

(2) Issues to be considered

- a) The national government shall establish Japan Hepatitis Day based on the World Hepatitis Day as resolved in the World Health Assembly in May 2010. In addition, the national and local governments shall cooperate with the Viral Hepatitis Research Foundation of Japan that has held the "Liver Week" for many years, in order to conduct intensive dissemination of information regarding hepatitis.
- b) The national and local governments shall disseminate information regarding hepatitis to ensure people of all ages have accurate knowledge of hepatitis
- c) The national and local governments shall promote informing the population of the possibility that anyone can be infected with the hepatitis virus, not only by sexual activity, but also through maternal-fetal transmission and horizontal transmission in infants and children, and the necessity of preventive measures, considering that acute hepatitis B (genotype A) has recently been reported in Japan and is likely to become chronic compared with conventional types.
- d) The national and local governments shall disseminate information regarding symptoms of the disease and knowledge of hepatitis and the systems established for hepatitis treatment, to recommend that patients with hepatitis visit institutions in cooperation with health care insurers, organizations of physicians, other health care workers and personnel in charge of health care at work sites and business operator organizations.
- e) The national government shall separately collect information necessary for patients with hepatitis from health care workers including physicians, personnel in charge of health care at work sites and business operators, and shall disseminate information.
- f) The national government shall request business operator organizations to cooperate to develop a social system providing appropriate hepatitis treatment to patients as well as maintaining their working conditions. (Repeat)
- g) The national government shall request that the Hepatitis Information Center improves the current system for information provision so that information about hepatitis is appropriately provided in regional medical institutions.
- h) The national and prefectural governments shall disseminate information regarding consultation centers for hepatic diseases in base hospitals.
- i) The national government shall again inform health care insurers and business operators of appropriate procedures for notification and handling of hepatitis test results, giving due consideration to privacy. (Repeat)
- j) The national government shall conduct research to determine the actual level and nature of prejudice and discrimination against patients with hepatitis, and shall develop guidelines for the prevention of such prejudice and discrimination, and shall cooperate with local governments using results of relevant research and shall provide and disseminate information regarding hepatitis.

**Chapter 9 Other important issues related to promotion of control measures for hepatitis**

(1) Enhancement and improvement of support for patients with hepatitis, and their family

- a) Policies to be developed

The national government shall improve the current systems in place for supporting consultation and enhancing mental supporting systems so that patients with hepatitis and their family experience improved quality of life during hepatitis treatment. In addition, it is necessary to develop systems to take appropriate measures in order to respect human rights of all patients with hepatitis, and to eliminate unwarranted discrimination including when a patient with hepatitis is unreasonably discriminated.

b) Issues to be considered

- i. The national government shall promote information provision to relieve the anxiety of patients with hepatitis, and that of their families and shall provide the opportunity for patients with hepatitis, and their families to communicate with health care workers including physicians in cooperation with prefectural governments.
- ii. The national government shall request that the Hepatitis Information Center organize information required by consultants in core centers so that as much information as possible is provided.
- iii. The national government shall inform the general public regarding human rights consultation services available through the Human Rights Organs of the Ministry of Justice in cooperation with local governments.

(2) The scope of further support for patients with cirrhosis and liver cancer

Cirrhosis and liver cancer induced by hepatitis have few curative treatments and the population of patients with these conditions is currently aging. Therefore, the following measures shall be taken to relieve the anxiety experienced by patients with cirrhosis and liver cancer.

- a) The national government shall promote research into liver diseases including cirrhosis and liver cancer based on the "7-year Strategy for Hepatitis Research". The national and local governments shall also enhance education of human resources such as training of health care workers in order to improve the level of hepatitis treatment related to liver disease including cirrhosis and liver cancer.
- b) The national government shall promote information provision to relieve anxiety of patients with hepatitis, including patients with cirrhosis and liver cancer induced by hepatitis, and their families and shall provide the opportunity for patients with hepatitis, and their families, to communicate with health care workers including physicians in cooperation with prefectural governments.
- c) In the 2010 fiscal year, some forms of liver dysfunction were classified as a physical disability specified by the Act for the Welfare of Persons with Physical Disabilities (Act No. 283, 1949) under certain conditions. Liver transplantation, anti-immune therapy after liver transplantation, as well as treatment associated with the above, are now classified as disabilities and are the subject of the Services and Supports for Persons with Disabilities (rehabilitation treatment) and relevant action shall therefore continue to be taken in these disease areas.
- d) The national government shall conduct surveys and research to determine the actual status of hepatitis treatment of patients with cirrhosis and liver cancer and the impact of their disease on their quality of life, in order to collect information necessary to evaluate the scope of further support that may be necessary for patients with hepatitis-associated

cirrhosis and liver cancer.

(3) Promotion of control measures for hepatitis consistent with regional conditions

It is recommended that the prefectural governments develop systems for implementing measures against hepatitis that are consistent with regional conditions, and to promote these measures in cooperation with the relevant municipalities and special city wards, e.g., make a plan for promotion of measures for hepatitis by prefecture based on the principle of the Basic Act on Hepatitis Measures.

It is also recommended that the local governments take active measures for hepatitis in cooperation with other administrative organs including the national government.

(4) Activities based on the responsibility of the general public

Based on the provision of Article 6 of the Basic Act on Hepatitis Measures, it is necessary to take active measures for hepatitis and for the general public including patients with hepatitis, and their families and it is important to perform the following actions.

- a) All individuals must first understand that it is possible for hepatitis to progress to serious diseases such as cirrhosis and liver cancer, which severely affects their health keeping, if left untreated, and must understand the importance of undergoing hepatitis testing at least once and to be informed regarding their own hepatitis infection status, given the importance of treatment of the disease in the early stages.
- b) All individuals need to have an accurate understanding about activities that may lead to acquisition of new infection with hepatitis virus, and of the importance of taking precautions against such infection. In addition, individuals should take appropriate actions on the basis of accurate knowledge, to prevent unjustified discrimination against patients with hepatitis and to avoid causing undue anxiety and stress in patients due to discrimination based on a lack of knowledge about hepatitis virus infection.

(5) Review and routine report of basic guidelines for control measures for hepatitis

The Basic Act on Hepatitis Measures specifies in Article 9, Paragraph (5): "The Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare must review the Basic Guidelines on Hepatitis Measures at least once every five years, taking into consideration changes in the situation surrounding hepatitis-related medical care and based on an evaluation of the effects of hepatitis control measures, and when he/she finds necessary, make revisions to the Basic Guidelines on Hepatitis Measures."

These guidelines specify basic matters that need to be comprehensively promoted regarding control measures for hepatitis, taking into account the current conditions of hepatitis. Actions specified by these guidelines shall be taken hereafter, however, actions of the national and local governments shall be surveyed and assessed routinely and the guidelines shall be reviewed and revised even before the required 5 year period, as required after appropriate consideration of changes in hepatitis-related conditions. The conditions of actions specified by the guidelines shall be routinely reported to the Council for Promotion of Hepatitis Measures.