Hepatitis, let's not let our guard down. Because the path taken is the right one but it takes very little, just let your guard down to lose all the progress made. Because in the world the situation is really very different.

Today is World Hepatitis Day and is celebrated around the world on the anniversary of the birth of Nobel laureate Baruch Blumberg who discovered the hepatitis B virus (HBV) and developed a diagnostic test and vaccine against the virus.

The alphabet of hepatitis is complex: from hepatitis A to hepatitis E these are infectious processes affecting the liver which, despite having similar clinical pictures, are caused by different viruses even if in 10-20% of cases the agent responsible remains unknown. In addition, in the last decade of the last century, other viruses potentially involved in these infectious processes have been isolated.

From 1 January to 31 December 2019, SEIEVA - the Integrated Epidemiological System of Acute Viral Hepatitis coordinated by the Istituto Superiore di Sanità - recorded a reduction in the incidence of hepatitis A in Italy compared to 2018, while for hepatitis B and C rates remain stable, below 0.5 cases per 100,000.

Furthermore, in 2019 a peak related to hepatitis E was reached with a number of reported cases doubled compared to the previous year. An increase that is an alarm bell. In the world there are over 300 million people living with hepatitis B and C and more than 1 million deaths are recorded every year. But there are many, millions, people who do not know they are sick.

Unless diagnosed - and treated - millions of people will continue to suffer, die and the fight against hepatitis cannot be won. This is why the theme of World Day 2020 is confirmed as 'Find The Missing Millions - Find the missing millions'. It is important that this battle never stops. In 2016, governments around the world vowed to eliminate hepatitis by 2030 but 10 years later, progress has stalled.

Drastically reduce the impact of Hepatitis C by 2030.

This is one of the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the United Nations in 2016. It is a pleasure to be able to speak, on World Hepatitis Day, about an extremely important Italian study to address health policies to achieve this goal. In fact, more than 8.5 million European citizens are affected by chronic hepatitis B and hepatitis C, according to data from ECDC (the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control).

These data are probably underestimated but making sure that this disease is no longer a problem for public health is possible and desirable through the policy of “treating everyone” guaranteeing wider access to medicines.

This strategy, examined in a study by the Istituto Superiore di Sanità, published in the journal Hepatology, which involved 100 Italian clinical centers, assessed the benefits and costs of a "universal" treatment for all patients and not just patients "Prioritized", ie with advanced liver disease. It is true that Italy, compared to the rest of Europe, has a higher number of people infected with the Hepatitis C virus.
But if we extended the number of patients to be treated, bearing in mind that the prices of new drugs will inevitably fall, the study shows that the country would go to save. In other words, the “treat everyone” strategy has an extremely favorable cost-benefit ratio.

In this sense, the Italian health strategies are addressed: treating all patients with chronic HCV infection, precisely because of the important gains in terms of health and the parallel reduction over time of the costs incurred by the National Health Service.

Today, thanks to all these advances, we can confidently look to the WHO goal of reducing deaths related to HCV infection by 65% and treating at least 80% of patients with chronic HCV hepatitis. A goal that looks sustainable. Innovative drugs such as those we have today, which combine effectiveness with sustainability, represent the ideal combination for addressing this important challenge of the future.

UMdL participates in the World Day for the fight against viral hepatitis
"WE FIND THE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE LOST" on 28 July organized by the World Hepatitis Alliance, NOhep and supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For the second consecutive year, the main theme of the Day remains that of

"ELIMINIAMINIAMO THE HEPATITIS" in accordance with the provisions of Objective 3 in point 3.3 (by 2030, to put an end to the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, diseases transmitted through water and other communicable diseases) of the Sustainable Development Goals for the year 2030 promoted by the United Nations.

Updating occupational medicine contributed to the translation of the 2019 Campaign material into Italian and the translation of the subtitles of the official film of the 2019 World Day for the Fight against Viral Hepatitis. The Campaign for 2019 focuses on the millions of people who are unaware that they are infected. In fact, as stated on the official page of the World Hepatitis Day 2019,

"Out of 325 million people worldwide with viral hepatitis, over 290 million (9 out of 10!) Are suffering from hepatitis B or hepatitis C without knowing it. Until there is a significant extension of screening, diagnosis and access to treatment, more people will be infected and lives will continue to be lost. On the occasion of the World Day to Fight Viral Hepatitis, we are launching"

We find the millions of people who are lost", the three-year global campaign of awareness and support with the aim of breaking down the main barriers to diagnosis by placing organizations at the center of the solution. of civil society and the community of people affected by the disease All those who will contribute to achieving the goal of 30% of diagnoses by 2020. Find out more about the Campaign".