Reviewer's report

Title: HCV-Related Burden of Disease in Europe: A Systematic Assessment of Incidence, Prevalence, Morbidity, and Mortality

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Reviewer: Gary Davis

Reviewer's report:

This is an important contribution, though its observations and conclusions are largely based on absent, clearly inaccurate, or questionable data, as the authors readily acknowledge. Nonetheless, the authors have done a reasonable job in examining inconsistencies in the data and recognizing gaps.

I have a few minor suggestions:

1. Pg 9. Incidence reporting in inherently inaccurate for the clinical reasons cited as well as reluctance to report. Some earlier studies also estimated incidence based on prevalence and estimated chronicity rates; this is similar to your duration calculation method. Is there a way to correlate the sophistication of the public health or overall health reporting system in various countries to reported incidence? What does the last sentence in the second paragraph mean, i.e. fluctuations appear to be undirected?

2. Pg 10, Prevalence. What does "population representativeness" mean? How were the WHO prevalence data and those reported in publications obtained (methodology)? Are the national prevalence data from national health authorities that are referred to in the 3rd paragraph subjective estimates?

3. Pg 11, Mortality (and same comment for quality of life section): I am not sure that I understand how death from hepatitis C occurs without either cirrhosis or liver cancer being present. Please explain.

4. Discussion: Many of the deficiencies in the data have already been described in the results section and do not require repeating. I would suggest that the discussion be shortened and focus on specific deficiencies and how they might be addressed by physicians, hospitals, national public health authorities, and the WHO. Clearly, the authors are presenting this data to serve as a foundation for moving public health and patient care forward. That cannot be accomplished without better data and awareness.

Congratulations on tackling a very difficult project.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests