

Hepatitis remains a silent epidemic

The Philippine Star · 31 Jul 2018 · B10 · By SHEILA CRISOSTOMO

The Hepatology Society of the Philippines (HSP) has underscored the need for those who unknowingly have hepatitis to be diagnosed and undergo treatment, saying the disease remains a “silent epidemic.”

According to HSP president Jade Jamias, there are some 300 million people living with viral hepatitis worldwide. In the Philippines, about 10 million Filipinos are estimated to carry the Hepatitis B virus, while about 600,000 are infected with hepatitis C.

“Being part of the at-risk population in a country like the Philippines, the public is encouraged to take the hepatitis B testing and screening for other types of hepatitis,” he said.

The HSP strongly recommends hepatitis vaccination for hepatitis A and B as a preventive measure.

“If we do not find and treat the undiagnosed, more people will suffer and lives will continue to be lost,” he added.

In celebration of World Hepatitis Day on July 28, HSP had conducted a lay fora on viral hepatitis, free hepatitis screening and consultations and other activities at the Tutuban Center Mall in Divisoria, Manila.

The global theme for this year’s World Hepatitis Day is “Find the missing millions,” referring to the many undiagnosed with the disease who need to seek consultation before complications arise.

Hepatitis B and C are both associated with the development of liver cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma or liver cancer.

Due to its largely asymptomatic nature, people can have hepatitis without knowing it, making it a truly silent epidemic.