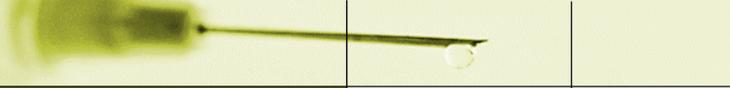


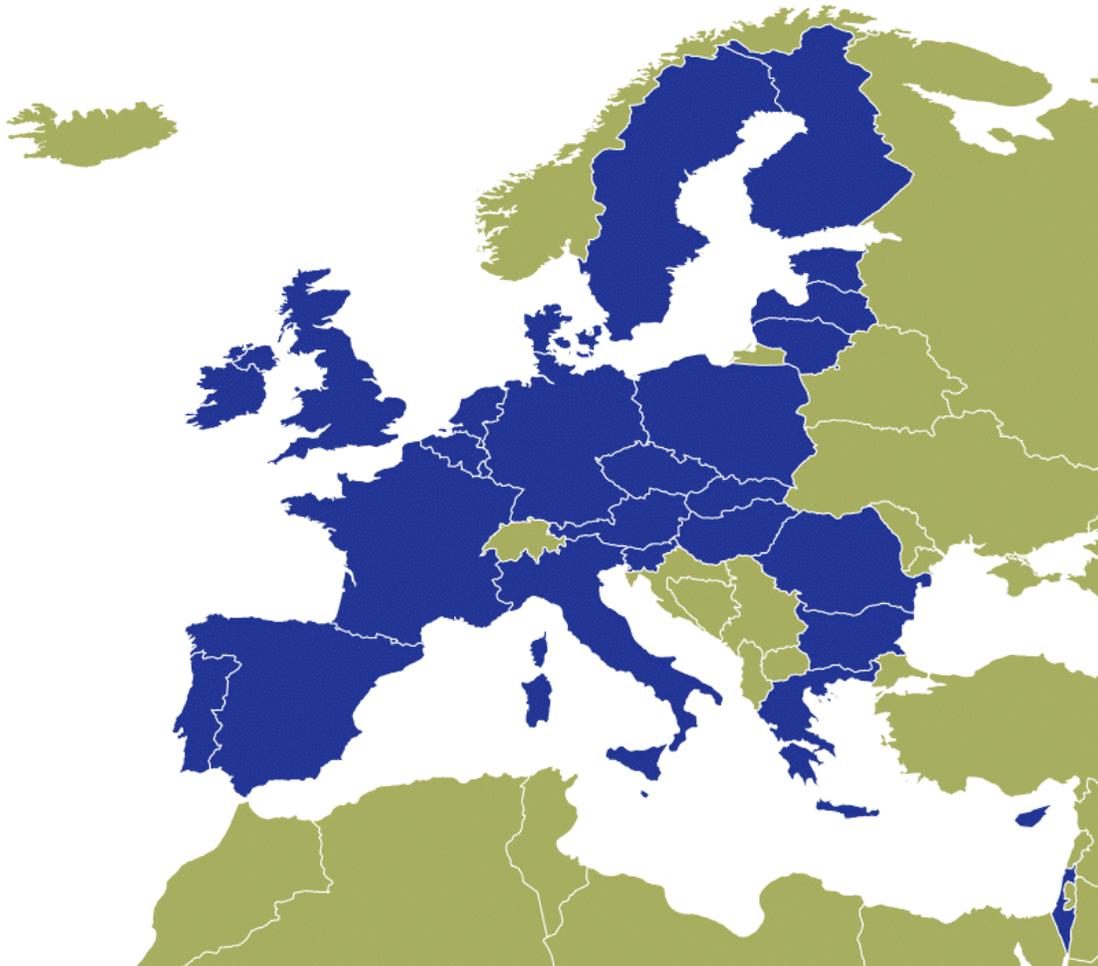


eurohep.net

surveillance of vaccine preventable hepatitis



Summary Progress Report EUROHEP.NET



**Period covered:
1 September 2003- 31 August 2004**

Acknowledgement and disclaimer

This concerted action is supported by the Quality of Live programme of the Fifth framework of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (1998 - 2002).

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Project Progress Summary

Section 1: PROJECT IDENTIFICATION		NOT CONFIDENTIAL
Title of the project: Surveillance of vaccine preventable hepatitis		
Acronym of the project: hepnet (Eurohep.net)		
Type of contract : Concerted Action (Pluripartenaire)		Total project cost (in euro) 599569 €
Contract number: QLK2-CT-2002-01579	Duration (in months) 36 Months	EU contribution (in euro) 599569 €
Commencement date: 1 September 2002		Period covered by the progress report: 1 September 2003 – 31 August 2004
<u>PROJECT COORDINATOR</u>		
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Key words: viral hepatitis, vaccine preventable, surveillance, feasibility		
World wide web address: www.eurohep.net		
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Section 2: Project Progress Report

NOT CONFIDENTIAL

Objectives:

The EUROHEP.NET project addresses issues related to surveillance and prevention of hepatitis A and B in the EU countries, Associated States and Israel (28 countries) with a view to study the feasibility of a future network on surveillance and prevention and to speed up the progress of these countries towards control of hepatitis A and B. EUROHEP.NET targeted initially 28 countries including the 25 countries of the European Union (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and UK), the 2 Associated States (Bulgaria, and Romania) and Israel. The overall aim of this concerted action is to take stock, co-ordinate, strengthen and standardise the country-specific surveillance and prevention activity of viral hepatitis A and B. This will be achieved by establishing a feasibility study of a future network on surveillance of hepatitis A and B in the participating countries and integrating the expert epidemiology and public health groups involved in the surveillance of infectious diseases in the respective countries.

Results and Milestones:

During the second year following results and milestones have been achieved:

- 22 countries have actively participated to the project and completed the on-line surveys.
- two progress meetings with the partners and a number of representatives from the national public health institutes were held.
- all data received through the on-line survey was analysed by the partners. The anticipated diversity of surveillance systems and prevention measures regarding viral hepatitis A and B in the region has been confirmed.
- a uniform presentation and publication of all the available data, in collaboration and consultation with the countries/institutes, was prepared in book form.
- draft guidelines, introducing standardisation if required and possible, respecting as much as possible the current practices in the different countries, and aiming at optimal protection of all EU citizens against vaccine-preventable hepatitis were prepared.

Benefits and Beneficiaries:

During this second period we worked on data analysis, data presentation and drafting of guidelines. The major impact of this concentered action will be during its final year when all results become public and the draft guidelines are checked, discussed and challenged.

- the involved country representatives have double checked and approved publication of their country specific hepatitis A and B surveillance and prevention data (22 countries)
- the uniform presentation of the data in book format will allow the countries, as well as EU and other interested parties, to easily take stock of the current situation and to compare different countries.
- the available information will contribute to a better understanding of the diversity of the current surveillance and vaccination strategies and help to identify potential hurdles towards harmonization
- the collection and reporting of the data was a good challenge towards the feasibility of this project and the feasibility of a future network for surveillance of vaccine preventable viral hepatitis.

Future Actions:

The next steps are:

- distribute the EUROHEP.NET book to all participants and targeted countries.
- create an online survey allowing other stakeholders to give their feedback on the draft guidelines regarding surveillance and prevention of vaccine preventable hepatitis.
- invite all initially targeted national institutes and other participating countries to comment the drafted recommendations and guidelines. Countries will be asked for acceptability and implementability of these specific guidelines.
- challenge the draft guidelines with other stakeholders including DG SANCO, WHO/EURO, European Sero-Epidemiology Network (ESENII), Viral Hepatitis Prevention Board (VHPB), and the European Centre for disease prevention and control (ECDC).
- extract / identify potential hurdles to implement harmonized guidelines on surveillance and prevention of vaccine-preventable hepatitis.
- further invest in constructive collaboration with related EU projects, and WHO/EURO
- discuss all the results and feedback at a specific meeting 20-21 April 2005. Active participation of the identified stakeholders and the representatives from the participating countries/institutes is anticipated.
- write final report on the feasibility of an European network for surveillance of vaccine preventable viral hepatitis.