

**4<sup>th</sup> HEPATITIS C**  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY  
GROUP  
**TAG Meeting**

**NOVEL APPROACHES TO IMPROVING  
HCV SCREENING AND LINKAGE TO CARE**

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# Background

- Georgia launched hepatitis C elimination program in 2015, targeting 90% reduction in HCV prevalence by 2020
- The number of patients enrolled in the program declined from the end of 2016
- Innovative screening and linkage to care activities are needed to achieve elimination goal

# Aim:

- To conduct several small-scale pilot studies to identify effective approach to increase HCV testing coverage and linkage to care.

## 3 sub-components:

1. Evaluation of HCV door to door testing to improve HCV screening coverage
2. Implementation and evaluation of patient navigator services at secondary/tertiary care settings
3. Evaluation of HCV screening at large workplaces

# **SUB-COMPONENT 1: HCV DOOR-TO-DOOR TESTING**

# Methodology

- Three cities: Tbilisi, Zugdidi, Batumi
- Study teams comprising of two interviewers
- Detailed guide for study teams
- Training of interviewers
- Materials for interviewers (data collection forms, tablets, hemoglobinometer, HCV rapid tests)
- Door-to-door testing with HCV rapid tests was conducted in a pre-defined districts of selected cities

## Methodology (cont.)

- Incentive to get HCV testing was used, such as offering free hemoglobin testing by the same finger prick
- Tablets with internet access enabled interviewers to exclude those with already proven HCV infection and/or treated within elimination program
- Participants who agreed to get HCV testing pre- and post-test consultations were ensured

# Methodology (cont.)

- Data collection forms:
  - Form #1 - Demographic characteristics of family member who refused participation
  - Form #2 – Questionnaire of Barriers for HCV+ person who is not involved in the Hepatitis C elimination program
  - Form #3 - Demographic characteristics and testing results of family member who consented to participate



## Methodology (cont.)

- Testing results were entered in the Hep C screening database by the interviewers
- If participants tested HCV+, study team served as a case navigator:
  - Provided information on facilities where they could address for confirmatory assay
  - Facilitated their visit to the clinic

# Results

	<b>Tbilisi</b>	<b>Batumi</b>	<b>Zugdidi</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Families reached</b>	1882 (100%)	291 (100%)	633 (100%)	2806 (100%)
<b>Family refused to participate</b>	664 (35%)	1 (0,3%)	5 (0,8%)	670 (24%)
<b>Individuals reached</b>	2601 (100%)	861 (100%)	1633 (100%)	5095 (100%)
<b>Screened</b>	2404 (92%)	812 (94%)	1202 (74%)	4418 (87%)
<b>HCV+</b>	18 (0,7%)	9 (1,1%)	21 (1,7%)	48 (1,1%)
<b>Individual refusal to get tested</b>	197 (8%)	49 (6%)	431 (26%)	677 (13%)
<b>Already tested</b>	115 (58%)	33 (67%)	247 (57%)	395 (58%)
<b>Positive</b>	33 (29%)	33 (100%)	66 (27%)	132 (33%)
<b>Linked</b>	24 (72%)	33 (100%)	49 (74%)	106 (80%)
<b>Refusal reason_Other</b>	82 (42%)	16 (33%)	184 (43%)	282 (42%)
<b>Refused with no reason</b>	44 (54%)	-	102 (55%)	146 (52%)
<b>Afraid of testing</b>	1 (1%)	-	-	1 (0,3%)
<b>Parental refusal</b>	35 (43%)	14 (88%)	81 (44,5)	130 (46%)
<b>Due to health condition</b>	2 (2%)	1 (6%)	-	3 (1%)
<b>Due to old age</b>	-	1 (6%)	1 (0,5%)	2 (0,7%)
<b>HCV prevalence (overall)</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>

**SUB-COMPONENT 2:  
PATIENT NAVIGATOR SERVICES AT  
SECONDARY/TERTIARY CARE SETTINGS**

# Methodology

- Three cities: Tbilisi, Zugdidi, Batumi
- 4 clinics
- One navigator at each clinic
- Detailed guide for navigators
- Training of navigators
- Data collection: From March 2018 to the end of September 2018
- Linkage definition: addressing for confirmatory assay

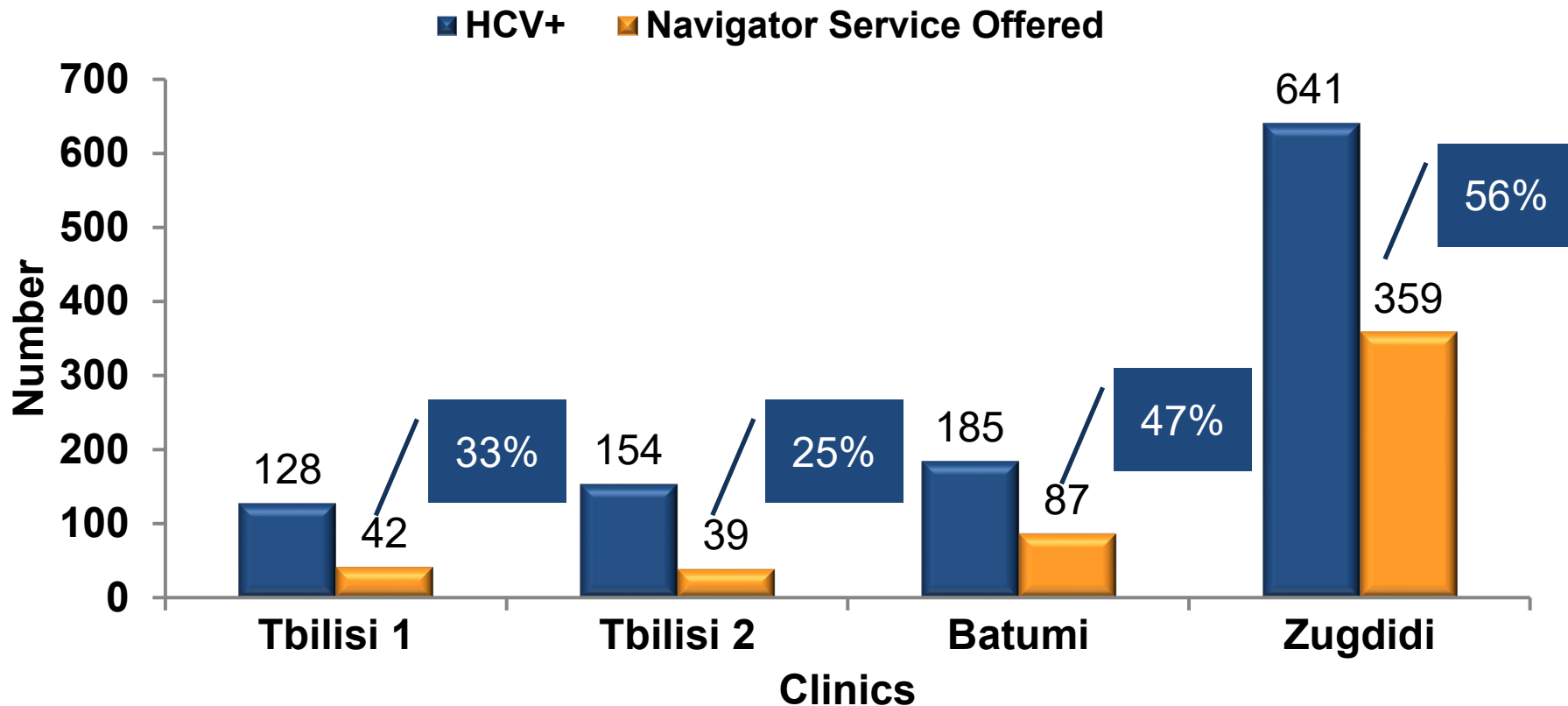
# Methodology (cont.)

- Navigator's tasks:
  - Obtain information on the number and results of HCV tests conducted in the hospital
  - Communicate HCV test result to HCV positive individuals
  - Provide information on Hep C treatment centers and procedures for enrollment in Hep C elimination program
  - Facilitate referral to the clinic and if patient is willing so, assists in making an appointment at the clinic chosen by the patient
  - Monitor linkage to care of referred individuals by providing reminder calls

# Results (March-September 2018)

	Tbilisi 1	Tbilisi 2	Batumi	Zugdidi	Total
<b>Screened (N)</b>	2 577	3 314	6 246	7 852	19 989
<b>HCV + (N/%)</b>	128/4,9%	154/4,6%	185/2,9%	641/8,2%	1108/5,5%
<b>- Male</b>	115 (90%)	126 (82%)	139 (75%)	408 (64%)	788 (71%)
<b>- Age (range / average)</b>	30-82 56,5	31-87 59,4	25-84 54,1	12-101 61,0	12-101 59,1

# Navigator Service Distribution among HCV positives

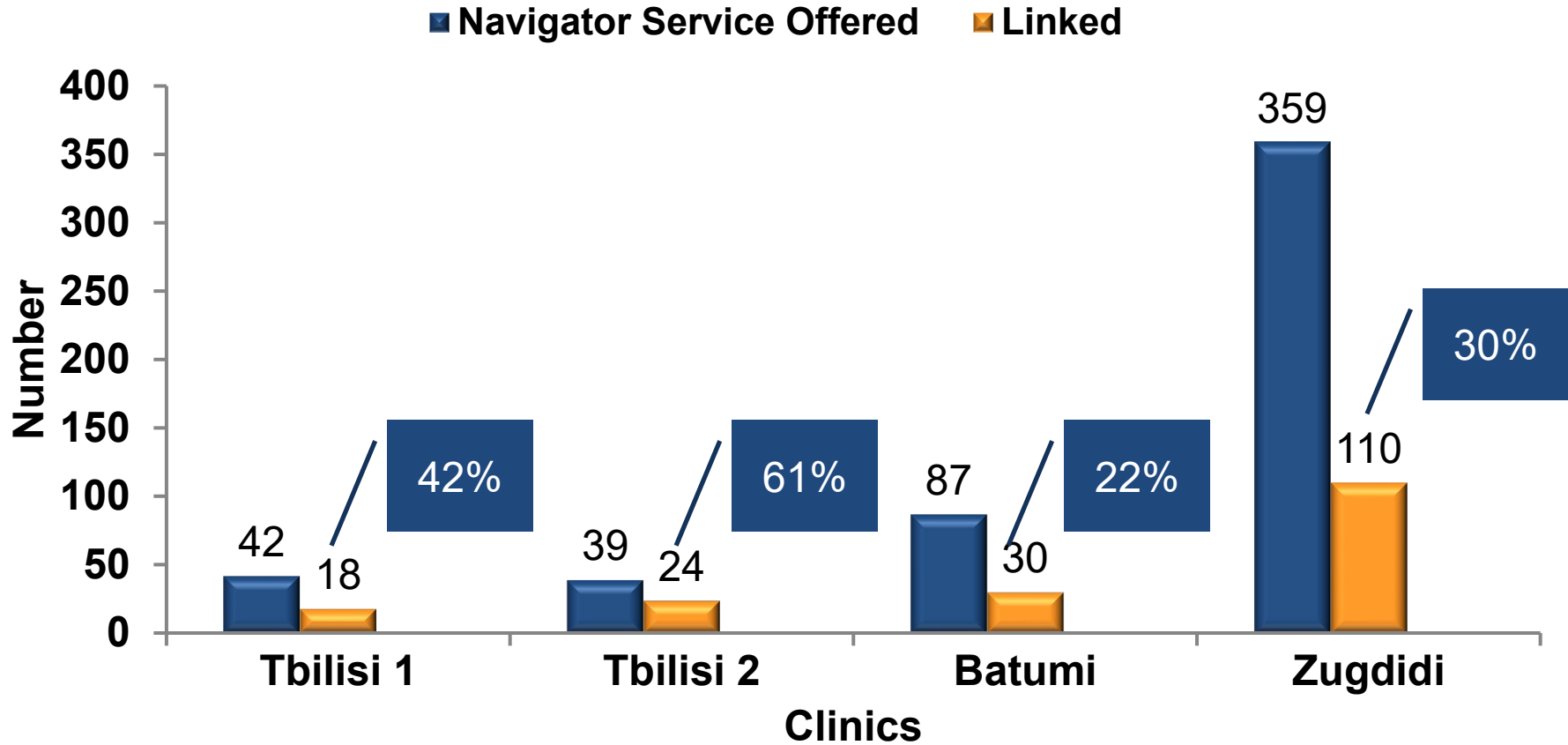


# Reasons of NOT offering Navigator Service

	Tbilisi 1 N / %	Tbilisi 2 N / %	Batumi N / %	Zugdidi N / %	Total N / %
Already enrolled in the program	63 (73%)	89 (77%)	30 (31%)	141 (50%)	323 (56%)
Could not be reached	9 (10%)	1 (0,9%)	-	39 (14%)	49 (8%)
HCV RNA or HCV Cor Antigen negative	6 (7%)	21 (18%)	30 (31%)	82 (29%)	139 (24%)
HCV RNA or HCV Cor Antigen results not known	-	4 (4,1%)	18 (18%)	1 (0,6%)	23 (4%)
Died	-	-	7 (7%)	15 (5%)	22 (3,8%)
Refused to take sample for confirmatory assay	7 (8%)	-	13 (13%)	4 (1,4%)	21 (3,6%)
Left the country	1 (2%)	-	-	-	1 (0,6%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>581 (100%)</b>



# Linkage within Navigator Services



# Linkage within reminder calls

	Linked within 1 <sup>st</sup> call	Linked within 2 <sup>nd</sup> call	Linked within 3 <sup>rd</sup> call	Total Linked
Tbilisi 1	10 (56%)	7 (39)	1 (5%)	18 (100%)
Tbilisi 2	14 (58)	2 (8%)	8 (34%)	24 (100%)
Batumi	6 (20%)	10 (33%)	14 (47%)	30 (100%)
Zugdidi	47 (42%)	39 (35%)	24 (23%)	110 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>77 (42%)</b>	<b>58 (32%)</b>	<b>47 (26%)</b>	<b>182 (100%)</b>

# Reasons of NOT Linked

	Tbilisi 1 N / %	Tbilisi 2 N / %	Batumi N / %	Zugdidi N / %	Total N / %
No reason	7 (29%)	12 (80%)	46 (81%)	141 (57%)	206 (60%)
Lost to follow up	2 (8%)	-	-	1 (0,4%)	3 (0,9%)
Due to health condition	11 (46%)	1 (7%)	3 (5%)	54 (22%)	69 (20%)
Due do old age	3 (12%)	2 (13%)	7 (12%)	48 (19%)	60 (17%)
Died	1 (5%)	-	-	3 (1,2%)	4 (1,2%)
Left the country	-	-	1 (2%)	2 (0,4%)	3 (0,9%)
Total	24	15	57	249	345 (100%)

**SUB-COMPONENT 3:  
EVALUATION OF HCV SCREENING AT  
LARGE WORKPLACES**

# Methodology

- HCV voluntary and confidential screening at selected workplaces
- Study team collected blood samples and participants' contact information at workplaces
- Case manager was assigned to communicate testing results to participants and to follow positive cases

# Results

- As of today:
  - 883 screened
  - 19 (2,2%) anti-HCV positive, out of them:
    - 14 (1,5%) HCV RNA positive
  - Out of 14 HCV RNA positive:
    - 11 (79%) started treatment
    - 3 (21%) have not shown up yet

# Next Steps:

- Workplace testing
- Statistical analysis
- Develop recommendations
- Report preparation and presentation
- Manuscript preparation and submission

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**THANK YOU!**