

HCVAction

Bringing you the latest hepatitis C news and events

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THE LANCET

Lancet study finds DAA treatments for hepatitis C associated with reduced risk of mortality and liver cancer

A study published in [The Lancet](#) this month has found that direct-acting antiviral (DAA) treatments for hepatitis C are associated with a reduced risk of mortality and liver cancer. The findings contrast with the controversial [Cochrane Review](#) into DAAs, published in September 2017, which cast doubt on the clinical effectiveness of DAAs.

[The Lancet](#) set up an observational study of around 10,000 patients. Three quarters of these patients had been treated with DAAs at follow-up, and a quarter were untreated. Patients who had received treatment had a significantly decreased incidence of death or hepatocellular carcinoma than those who had not received treatment. The study found that patients who had received treatment were 52% less likely to die prematurely and 33% less likely to have developed hepatocellular carcinoma. Risk of decompensated cirrhosis was similar in both groups of patients.

Estimated adjusted risk of death at one year in untreated patients was 84 deaths per 10,000 patients, compared with 40 per 10,000 in treated patients.

The estimated adjusted risk of developing hepatocellular carcinoma within a year in untreated patients was 129 cases per 10,000 patients, versus 86 per 10,000 in patients who had received treatment.

The full Lancet study can be accessed [here](#), and a summary press release [here](#).



Hepatitis C motion passes unanimously in London Assembly

The London Assembly this month unanimously passed a motion calling on London Mayor Sadiq Khan to lead on raising awareness of hepatitis C in the capital city.

Susan Hall AM, who introduced the motion, told Assembly Members, that hepatitis C is something “we all need to be talking about”. Hall emphasised that hepatitis C is a “major public health issue”, affecting an estimated 40,000 people living in London and said that Assembly Members “must do all we can” to raise awareness about new, effective treatments to achieve elimination in London.

Onkar Sahota AM seconded the motion, commending the Mayor for his ongoing partnership work with Public Health England and third sector organisations. Sahota highlighted that 30% of people with hepatitis C in England live in London, which demonstrates the importance of increasing testing and raising awareness about the availability of new treatments. However, Sahota also warned that efforts to prevent new hepatitis C infections could be undermined by severe and sustained cuts to local authority public health budgets.

The debate on the London Assembly motion can be viewed [here from 2.50.00 onwards](#).



Health Protection Scotland report makes recommendations to accelerate hepatitis C elimination in Scotland

A new report from [Health Protection Scotland](#) (HPS) sets out national recommendations for improvements to case finding and access to care which would accelerate Scotland's efforts to eliminate hepatitis C.

The report was produced at the request of the Scottish Government by a group of expert clinicians who reviewed existing evidence and agreed recommendations on four key topic areas. Proposed recommendations were also discussed at a national stakeholder event and directly with Alcohol and Drug Partnership leads.

The report recommends the national roll-out of a series of interventions which were found to be effective in increasing numbers of people tested and treated for hepatitis C and reducing new transmissions.

Key recommendations set out in the report include:

- HCV testing should be opt-out at services used by groups at highest risk of HCV, and the requirement to offer testing should be written into service contracts
- All pharmacies that dispense OST or provide injecting equipment must offer testing or have a clear pathway into testing and treatment
- HCV treatment and care services should accept referrals from patients, peers, and third sector partners, in addition to referrals from healthcare practitioners
- Treatment should be provided in a variety of locations close to the patient, and must be available in all appropriate Drug Use services
- Pilots should be conducted to investigate the effectiveness of point of care testing, self-testing, and other novel approaches of testing, and novel testing methods should be rolled out widely if proven effective

The Scottish Government has previously stated that the HPS report would be a precursor to further development of Scotland's national approach to hepatitis C

in line with the report's recommendations. Health boards have been informed that the Scottish Government will now begin consulting on the content of a national hepatitis C elimination strategy, due to be published this spring.

Read the full Health Protection Scotland report [here](#).

News & Reports

* The [Hepatitis C Coalition](#) has published a summary report of its December 2018 policy roundtable on hepatitis C and BBVs in prisons. The report covers discussion points including the need for better implementation of opt-out testing, reducing points of attrition along the care pathway, tackling stigma and developing stronger links with community services. Read the full report in the HCV Action resource library [here](#).

* [Hepatitis Scotland](#) will host its national conference, titled 'Access All Areas', on 28th March. Sessions throughout the day will explore and highlight good practice opportunities and practical implications for staff and services focused on eliminating hepatitis C as a public health issue in Scotland. The conference will also discuss the findings of the national expert working group on case-finding and access to care summarised above. Registration for the event is open [here](#).

* Applications are now open for the Find the Missing Millions in-country advocacy programme sponsored by the [World Hepatitis Alliance](#). Five successful applicants will be supported to develop plans to advocate for policy makers to take action and increase diagnosis rates for hepatitis C. In addition to receiving a small amount of seed funding to help initiate their activities, members will be invited to pool expertise and learn from leading experts working within the field. Applications are open to World Hepatitis Alliance member organisations only. Further information is available [here](#).

* [HCV Action](#) has announced it will be hosting a national event on 4th July 2019 bringing together key Operational Delivery Network (ODN) staff to discuss challenges and solutions to tackling hepatitis C. Attendance is by invitation only. Anyone interested in attending should email hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk to express interest.

Share your good practice...

If you would like your service to be featured as a good practice case study on the HCV Action website, have any news to share with colleagues, or would be

interested in being an [HCV Action Ambassador](#), please send an email to hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk.



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