

June 2017

*HCV Action brings together hepatitis C health professionals from across the patient pathway with the pharmaceutical industry and patient representatives to share expertise and good practice.*

### News & reports...

\* A new research article published in the [PLOS One](#) journal found comparable hepatitis C treatment adherence and SVR rates among injecting drug users as non-injecting drug users. The authors conclude that the data supports a public health strategy of hepatitis C treatment and eradication in people who inject drugs in the direct acting antiviral (DAA) treatment era. The full article can be read [here](#).

\* The [Scottish Drugs Forum](#) has published a new report on older drug users, which includes findings on hepatitis C. The study collected data from 123 problem drug users aged 35-57 years old, with a mean age of 41 years. Over two thirds of the participants had used hepatitis C services in the past and hepatitis C treatment was the third highest ranked service participants intended to use in the future, which the authors say suggests a higher level of general hepatitis C prevalence than the overall drug using population. The report, titled [Older People With Drug Problems in Scotland](#), can be read [here](#).

\* The [World Health Organisation](#) has added sofosbuvir/velpatasvir (brand name Epclusa) to its Essential Medicines List (EML) for 2017. The drug is the first combination therapy to treat all six genotypes of hepatitis C. The EML is a collection of medicines deemed essential by the WHO for addressing the most important

## Clinicians and experts cast doubt on hepatitis C Cochrane review



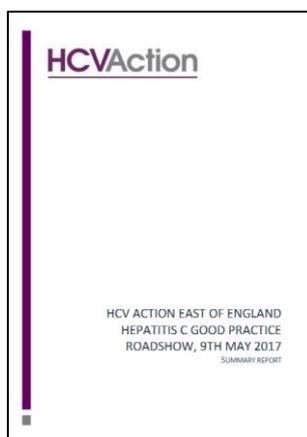
A wide range of clinicians and experts have raised concerns about the conclusions of a recently-published [Cochrane review](#) into direct acting antiviral (DAA) treatments for

hepatitis C. The study questioned the effect DAAs have on hepatitis C-related morbidity or all-cause mortality.

In response, a range of hepatitis C experts wrote a [letter](#), published in [The Guardian](#), calling the analysis “fundamentally flawed”. Referring to [The Guardian’s coverage](#) of the review, they wrote: “The Cochrane review that you highlight analysed clinical trials, which are by nature short term, where the sole purpose was to evaluate the virological efficacy of new antiviral drugs. The trials were neither designed, nor powered, to assess mortality, so it is hardly surprising that the Cochrane review was unable to identify any impact on mortality.”

An [editorial](#) in [The Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology](#) highlighted population-level data indicating that mortality and need for liver transplantation for chronic hepatitis C have decreased since the introduction of DAAs, concluding that “the overwhelming indication is that they help patients to live healthier lives”.

## HCV Action Cambridge hepatitis C roadshow summary report published



A summary report of the [HCV Action](#) hepatitis C roadshow in Cambridge, which took place on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May, is now available in the [HCV Action](#) resource library, along with all the presentation slides from the event.

The event brought together clinicians, nurses, drug service professionals, commissioners and others from across the East of England, to highlight and promote good practice, and discuss specific local issues in relation to hepatitis C.

As well as talks on local epidemiology, treatment for hepatitis C, the commissioning landscape and the patient perspective, the event featured good practice case study presentations on hepatitis C treatment community outreach in Essex and hepatitis C testing and treatment in Ipswich prisons.

public health needs. The list is used by many countries to increase access to medicines and guide decisions about which products they ensure are available for their populations. The WHO news release announcing the new EML can be read [here](#).

\* A new pilot is taking place in Swansea, aiming to develop on-the-spot testing for hepatitis A, B and C. The new testing method would use a patient's saliva, instead of blood, making testing simpler and quicker. The two-year project is being led by the Swansea-based [Biovici](#) in partnership with the [National Physical Laboratory](#) (the UK's National Measurement Institute) and the [University of Chongqing](#). A [BBC](#) news story on the project can be read [here](#).

\* [NICE](#) has released its latest quality standard on liver disease. The quality standard covers identifying, assessing and managing chronic liver disease in children, young people and adults, and cirrhosis in young people and adults. The full quality standard can be read [here](#).

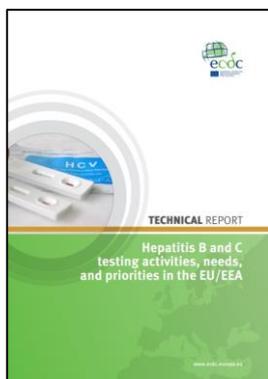
\* [The Hepatitis C Trust](#) will be holding a Patient Conference on World Hepatitis Day (28<sup>th</sup> July 2017). Speakers will include Professor Graham Foster (Professor of Hepatology, [Queen Mary University](#)), Sam May (Head of Support Services, [The Hepatitis C Trust](#)) and Dr Magdalena Harris (Lecturer, [London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine](#)) and there will also be an opportunity for patients to share their personal stories about the impact of hepatitis C. The event is open to patients, clinicians and anyone else affected by or working in the field of hepatitis C, and places can be booked [here](#).

\* The [London Joint Working Group on Substance Use and Hepatitis C](#) has issued a 'save the date' for its seventh annual conference, which will take place on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The conference will feature talks and workshops on topics including hepatitis C as a

Attendees also took part in workshops on the work of the Operational Delivery Network, awareness and testing in drug services, and hepatitis C in South Asian communities.

The full summary report is available in the [HCV Action](#) resource library [here](#).

## Survey finds gaps in hepatitis C testing and monitoring across European countries



Two semi-structured surveys, carried out by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, have found a wide variation in national testing policy and a lack of monitored data in European countries.

The survey findings have been published in a technical report, [Hepatitis B and C testing activities, needs, and priorities in the EU/EEA](#), which details wide variation in national testing policy and practice for hepatitis B and C, and limited availability of data on HBV/HCV liver morbidity and mortality.

Of the 20 European countries that responded to the survey, 18 (86%) reported having national testing guidance that included hepatitis C, but just ten countries (48%) had specific hepatitis C testing guidance. Among those responding, 11 countries (52%) thought that there was a need for European-level HBV/HCV testing guidance, with the most commonly reported reason being that European guidance would assist in developing national policy, or add value to existing policy.

The study also found that HBV or HCV status in morbidity or mortality data were recorded by only a small number of countries, and was not consistently reported across different morbidity and mortality indicators.

The full technical report from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control can be accessed in the [HCV Action](#) resource library [here](#).

## Final call for written evidence for Hepatitis C Trust Scottish elimination inquiry



The Hepatitis C Trust is seeking final submissions of written evidence to its Scottish hepatitis C elimination inquiry, with a deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> July.

The project, which is being supported by [The Hepatitis C Trust's](#) cross-party Scottish Parliamentary Champions, seeks to map out how the elimination of hepatitis C in Scotland can be achieved.

Two oral evidence sessions have already taken place in the Scottish Parliament, and written evidence is being sought from patients, third sector organisations, the clinical community, health boards, industry and others.

health inequality in London, barriers to data collection and onward referral, active case finding, and future opportunities and aspirations for the elimination of hepatitis C. Further details and registration will follow in the coming weeks.

Share your good practice...

*If you would like your service to be featured as a good practice case study on the HCV Action website, please send an email to [hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk](mailto:hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk).*

We want to keep HCV Action's membership updated on news and events from across the country.

If you have any news you would like to share with colleagues or would like to publicise an event please email details to [hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk](mailto:hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk).

The evidence will be used to develop a 'blueprint for elimination', setting out the practical steps required to ensure that Scotland meets its commitment to eliminate hepatitis C by 2030.

Further details of the project, and a form for submitting written evidence, are available on [The Hepatitis C Trust website here](#).

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