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HCVAction

Bringing you the latest hepatitis C news and events

May 2019



Infected Blood Inquiry public hearings begin

The [Infected Blood Inquiry](#)'s public hearings began this month in London, with hearings also taking place in Belfast. The inquiry itself is expected to last at least three years. In the first few days the inquiry heard that infected blood may have been given after what was believed to be the "safe date" of September 1991 when blood was properly screened.

The inquiry chair, Sir Brian Langstaff called for wider medical screening for hepatitis C, saying that more screening would be needed to meet the [World Health Organization](#) target to eliminate the disease by 2030. [The Hepatitis C Trust](#) has written blogs summarising the powerful testimony from witnesses to the inquiry, available [here](#).

Read more about patients who believe they were infected after the safe date [here](#) and more about Sir Brian Langstaff's call for more testing [here](#).

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HCV Action hosts #HCVchat on hepatitis C in Scotland

This month saw [HCV Action](#)'s latest #HCVchat focusing on hepatitis C in Scotland with Dr Stephen Barclay, Consultant Gastroenterologist at [Glasgow Royal Infirmary](#).

The discussion covered a range of topics and multiple organisations took part. The following points were raised by participants:

- The impact of pharmacy testing, particularly when coupled with needle-exchange.
- The potential benefits peer mentors with lived experience can bring to supporting treatment, as well as the barriers to these schemes.
- The increase in testing rates within addiction services in Glasgow since 2016.
- [Waverley Care](#) noted one in five people in Scottish prisons tested positive for hepatitis C and that engaging with prison staff was a key way to ensure clear pathways to treatment.

You can catch up on the Twitter chat [here](#) (tweets will appear in reverse chronological order) and follow and tweet HCV Action [here](#). Thanks to all who took part in May's #HCVchat. More will take place later in the year and will be announced via HCV Action's e-updates and Twitter account.



HCV Action hosting National ODN Stakeholder Event with British Viral Hepatitis Group

[HCV Action](#) and the [British Viral Hepatitis Group](#) will host a National ODN Stakeholder Event at the University of Warwick on 4th July. The event will be an opportunity for Operational Delivery Network representatives from across the country to come together to discuss the [NHS England](#) hepatitis C elimination deal, share best practice and identify solutions to common challenges.

The event will feature breakout sessions on community outreach, reaching ethnic minority groups, treating in prisons and engaging with local commissioners & other partners. Presentations will focus on reaction to the elimination deal, peer support for hepatitis C, and perspectives on tackling hepatitis C in drug and alcohol services, prisons and community pharmacies.

The event is for ODN representatives only and attendance is restricted to five people from each ODN. Please contact hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk for more information on registering.

News & Reports

* [NHS England](#) has written to GPs asking them to do more to identify patients infected as a result of blood transfusions prior to 1991. The letter asks GPs to identify patients who may have been given blood products prior to 1991 and to offer them treatment. You can read the letter [here](#).

* In his annual report, the [Chief Medical Officer for Wales](#) has called for more funding for community services including testing in order to eliminate hepatitis C as a public health concern. The CMO, Dr Frank Atherton, noted that the longer the 12,000 people in Wales believed to have hepatitis C remain untreated, the more the virus will spread. You can read the full report [here](#).

* [The Hepatitis C Trust's](#) evidence to Parliament's [Scottish Affairs Committee's](#) inquiry into drug use and misuse in Scotland and the [Health and Social Care Committee's](#) inquiry into drug policy have been published. The Trust noted that drug consumption rooms, needle exchange programmes and Opioid Substitution Therapy could reduce hepatitis C transmission, and called for the roll-out of drug consumption rooms to limit the spread of hepatitis C. You can read the full submission to the Scottish Affairs Committee [here](#) and the submission to the Health and Social Care Committee [here](#).

* [The Hepatitis C Trust](#) is recruiting for two peer support roles, one based in South West England and one based in South West Wales. Both roles involve supporting the Trust's peer mentor scheme to raise awareness of hepatitis C, encourage testing and treatment. Find out more about the roles [here](#).

* A research article in [The Lancet](#) has noted that if the risk of hepatitis C transmission through injecting drug use was removed, 43% of global hepatitis C infections would be prevented from 2018-2030. The reduction in transmissions would be proportionately greater in higher income than lower income countries. Read more [here](#).

* A new open-access journal, [JHEP Reports](#), has been launched by [EASL](#) (European Association for the Study of the Liver), the current publishers of the [Journal of Hepatology](#). The journal is inviting submissions reporting "early phase clinical trials, novel diagnostic biomarkers and technological

developments related to diagnostic and therapeutic devices." Read more about the new journal [here](#).

* The [WHO](#) has published a new policy brief setting out the current landscape of country hepatitis policies for harm reduction and hepatitis C testing and treatment for people who inject drugs and people in prisons. Read the report in the [HCV Action](#) resource library [here](#).

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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