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BACKGROUND

Given the large prevalence of hepatitis C among people who inject drugs, Needle and Syringe Programs (NSPs) are important avenues for beginning the hepatitis C conversation and expanding hepatitis C treatment access.

The aim of this study was to evaluate preliminary changes in self confidence amongst NSP frontline workers participating in a hepatitis C education program.

METHODS

The Hepatitis C for NSP Frontline Worker Education Program (“the Program”) was developed by the Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM) in collaboration with the Kirby Institute, UNSW, and under the guidance of an expert advisory group consisting of health practitioners, NSP service directors, community, researchers, academics and policy makers. The Program consists of online learning modules and a 2.5-hour interactive face-face workshop.

Participants self-reported changes in confidence through surveys which were administered pre-course and immediately post-course. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure confidence in 6 core competencies, with scores greater than 3 indicating confidence in each competency.

RESULTS

Twelve Workshops were held in the five month period between November 2018 and March 2019 (Table 1). Among participants who completed pre-and post-workshop surveys (n=62 and n=87, respectively), there was a clear increase in the proportion of people who reported above average confidence with respect to all six core competencies (Figure 2).

CONCLUSION

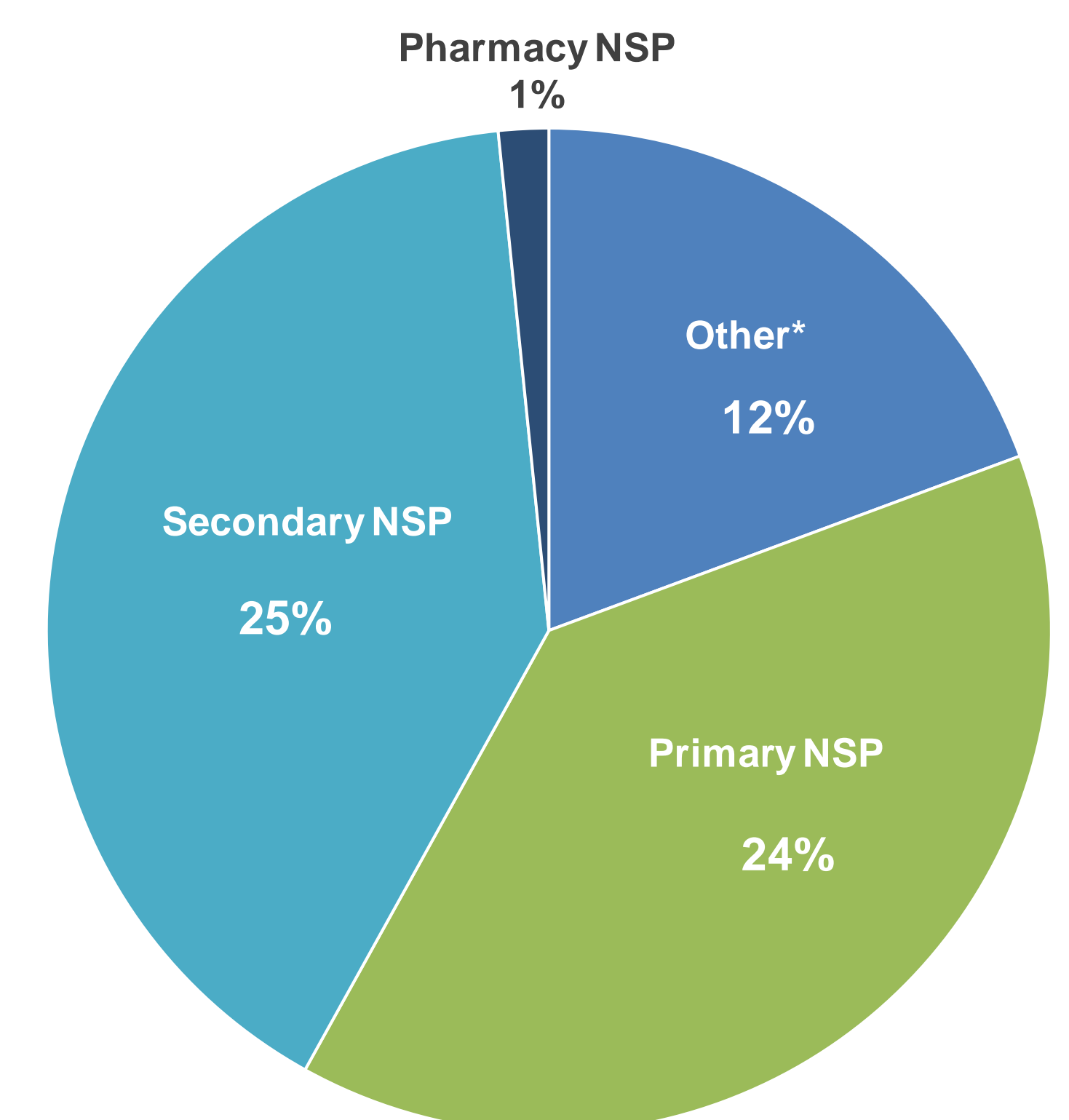
Self-reported confidence across the six competencies improved immediately following Program delivery. The largest percentage increases were in confidence in informing people about DAAs and explaining HCV and liver disease testing. Further analysis, including of a 3-month follow-up survey, will help determine sustained confidence and practice changes. A further six workshops will be delivered in 2019.

RESULTS

Table 1: Workshop locations and number of participants, 2018

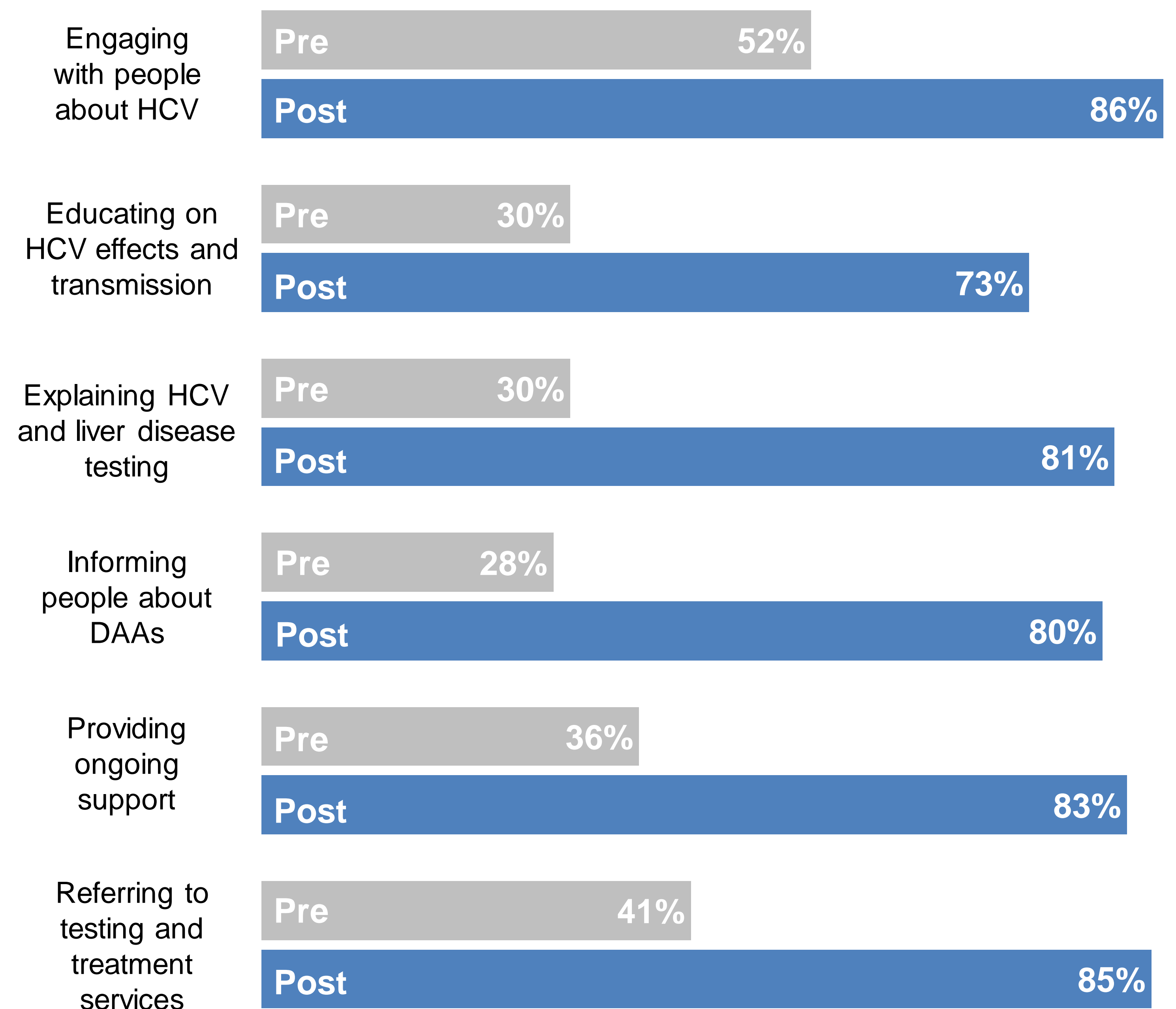
Workshop Location	No. Participants
Adelaide, SA	7
Albany, WA	13
Cairns, QLD	15
Canberra, ACT	10
Darwin, NT	8
Geraldton, WA	9
Hobart, TAS	9
Melbourne, VIC	20
Newcastle, NSW	12
Parramatta, NSW	17
Surry Hills, NSW	17
Townsville, QLD	19
Total	156

Figure 1: Service type of participants who completed the pre-course survey



* Includes homelessness services, mental health services, correctional services, rehabilitation units and other community organisations

Figure 2: Proportion of participants indicating confidence or high confidence in core program competencies, pre- and post-program completion



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