HEPATITIS C KNOWLEDGE AND TRAINING AMONG PEOPLE WORKING IN THE ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS SECTOR

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Background:
In Great Britain, the majority of hepatitis C (HCV) infection is attributable to the injection of drugs. While alcohol and other drug (AOD) services are effective tools for linking people who inject drugs (PWID) to care, further examination of workforce knowledge and training is needed in order to reduce gaps in the HCV care cascade.

Methods:
A survey examining HCV knowledge and workforce training needs was distributed to employees of five AOD treatment providers in Great Britain.

Results:
Of 115 participants, 71 (62%) reported having received no HCV training or expressed desire for additional training. Participants demonstrated a range of low (25%), medium (44%) and high (31%) knowledge about HCV. The likelihood of being in a higher knowledge category was associated with having received sufficient HCV training [adjusted odds ratio (AOR) = 0.19, 95% confidence interval CI (0.05, 0.71)] and not carrying a caseload [AOR = 0.38, 95% CI (0.15, 0.98)]. Forty percent of participants incorrectly reported that there is no curative treatment for HCV. Knowledge of the HCV cure was associated with a longer time working in the field [AOR = 1.11, 95% CI (1.02, 1.20)] and not carrying a caseload [AOR = 4.85, 95% CI (1.88, 12.49)].

Conclusion:
Overall, knowledge scores were variable. There are significant gaps in knowledge and training among AOD workers, particularly those carrying a caseload. A high number of participants were unaware of the curative treatment for HCV. Targeted training is required for the AOD workforce to ensure that people living with HCV are effectively linked to care.

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The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.