A REGIONAL PRISON CLEARED OF HEPATITIS C IN LESS THAN 12 MONTHS

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Introduction:
Treatment of highly marginalised groups such as people who inject drugs (PWID) and prisoners will be crucial to control of HCV spread. Broad DAA access criteria, including for prisoners, since March 2016 has provided the opportunity to evaluate potential rapid DAA scale-up and its impact at the individual and population levels. Lotus Glen Correctional Centre (LGCC) is located near Mareeba in Far North Queensland and has over 800 beds for male prisoners. A program of rapid DAA scale-up was initiated as part of the 'Make Cairns free of Hep C by 2020' campaign.

Methods:
Routine bloodborne virus and STI screening is undertaken on entry to LGCC, with more than 95% estimated to be tested for HCV. Nursing staff provide additional assessment for those testing HCV antibody positive, including confirmatory HCV RNA, HCV genotype, and liver disease staging (either Fibroscan or AST to platelet ratio index (APRI) in preparation for treatment. Monthly visits by the hepatitis nurse and doctors from Cairns Sexual Health Service see each of the patients and then treat them with medications supplied via Cairns Hospital. Data was collected on prisoners treated through the DAA program from March 1 2016 to January 31 2017.

Results:
A total of 94 patients were treated with DAA therapy regimens. 56 had genotype 3/3a and 38 had genotype 1a. Only 2 were considered to have likely cirrhosis via Fibroscan or AST to Platelet Ratio (APRI) scores at commencement of treatment. One prisoner with genotype 3 failed to achieve an SVR and is being re-treated. In early January 2017 there were no further existing patients known to have hepatitis C in the prison.

Conclusion:
In a regional prison setting with assistance from the local Hospital and Health Service clinical staff, a rapid DAA scale-up program has been successful in reducing the estimated HCV viraemic prevalence from approximately 12% to <1%. Thus, HCV elimination has been demonstrated, we believe for the first time in a prison setting.

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