

HEPATITIS C TREATMENT IN PRISON: A FORUM FOR QUEENSLAND

Bolton S¹, Haynes K¹

¹ Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM)

Introduction: People in custodial settings have significantly higher rates of hepatitis C (HCV) compared to the general population and are a priority group in Australia's National Hepatitis C Strategy. Eliminating HCV as a public health threat in Australia cannot be achieved without enhancing screening and treatment within prisons, however a collaborative approach to HCV management in prisons is lacking. In Queensland, prison health services are the responsibility of the individual hospital and health services, translating to significant variation in HCV treatment uptake and a range of unique models of care throughout the state. In recognition of these factors, ASHM convened a forum on HCV treatment in Queensland prisons on 23 February 2018. The forum aimed to bring together prison health staff and those providing in-reach viral hepatitis services to discuss models of care, challenges and solutions in moving towards eliminating HCV from Queensland's prisons.

Methods: Representatives involved in HCV treatment programs within five of Queensland's prisons presented on their models of care including challenges encountered and solutions implemented. Small group brainstorming sessions enabled participants to evaluate their current HCV treatment and management programs and identify potential solutions for improvements within the care cascade.

Results: The forum was attended by 57 Queensland participants including health professionals from each prison, hepatology teams, community health services, Queensland Health and Queensland Corrective Services staff. Ten recommendations were subsequently produced around testing, prevention, scripting, fibrosis assessment, continuity of care, staff education and state-wide communication.

Conclusion: The forum was successful in bringing together those providing HCV services to Queensland's prisons to discuss models of care and identifying practical solutions and recommendations in moving towards HCV elimination.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: This forum was funded by the Queensland Department of Health.