

IMPLEMENTING BLOOD BORNE VIRUS (BBV) SELF-TESTING BY DRY BLOOD SPOT TEST DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC IN SCOTLAND

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Background:

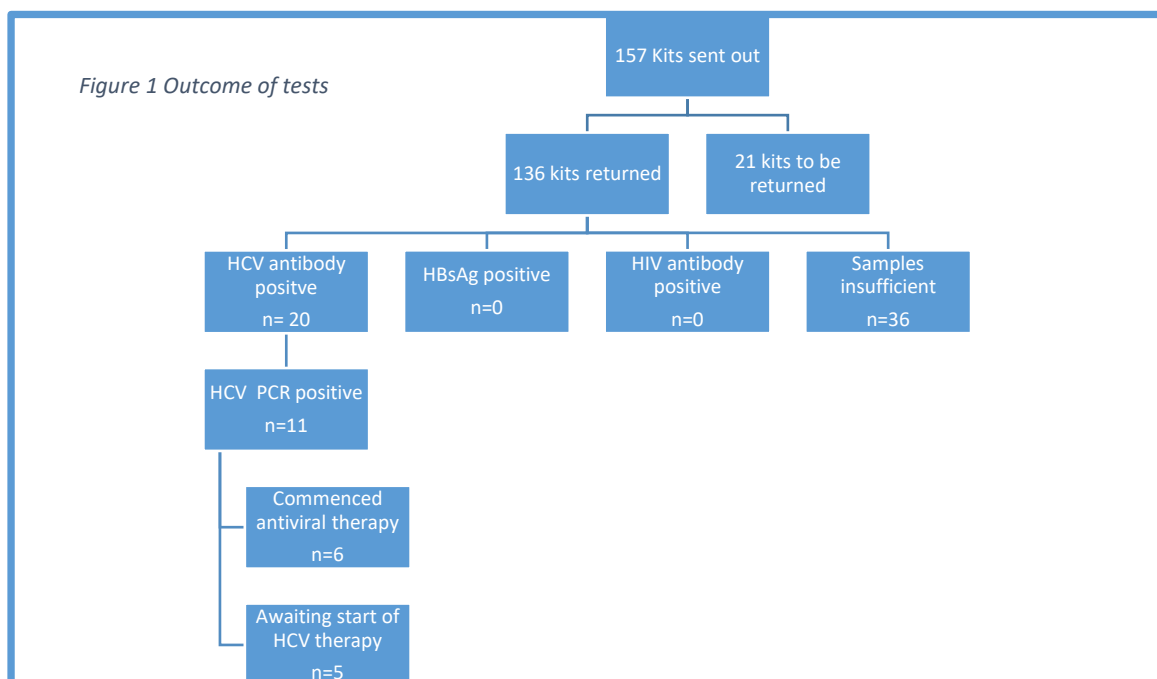
The Covid-19 pandemic saw a reduction in face to face appointments in services working with people who inject drugs. BBV testing was dramatically reduced in those at risk. Dry Blood spot testing (DBST) for BBVs had been primarily undertaken by staff in alcohol and drug services.

Description of model of care/intervention:

Self-test DBST for BBVs was implemented. Clients were offered a postal BBV DBST self-testing kit when engaging with Liver Nurses, drug and alcohol services, on release from prison or custody suites and Covid 19 vaccination centres. Self-test packs include a testing kit, prepaid envelope, detailed instructions and a web link to a video demonstration. Our goal within NHS Grampian is to make BBV testing convenient and accessible to all who may be at risk. The results are given to patients by liver nurses and treatment is arranged promptly if required.

Effectiveness:

The project commenced January 2021, in total 157 Kits have been sent out resulting in 136 being returned (86 %) Figure 1 describes the outcome. In patients previously known to be Hepatitis C (HCV) antibody positive, HCV PCR was performed. Of the 11 HCV PCR positive patients 2 had



previously been treated, indicating probable re-infection.

The majority of those receiving kits were men (105, 66%). The mean age at time of test was 42 (range 22 – 69).

Evaluation of this method is continuous and we continue to provide feedback and education to both staff and patients to improve engagement.

Conclusion and next steps:

This has been a challenging project due to the nature of the client group and complexities of obtaining the samples. The use of self-test DBST kits allows BBV testing to be accessible with 11% of individuals found to have active HCV infection. Liver nurses contacting patients with results enables rapid commencement of antiviral therapy when required.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Funding has been received from Gilead. No grants were received in relation to this project.