

EVALUATION OF A PEER-AND-NURSE-LED PRIMARY HEALTH CARE AND HEPATITIS C TESTING/TREATMENT MODEL WITHIN A PEER-BASED NEEDLE AND SYRINGE PROGRAM

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Background: Partnerships between peer-experts and providers in healthcare can demonstrate positive outcomes for key populations. Commencing in November 2018 the Kirketon Road Centre (KRC) a primary health care service in Kings Cross Sydney, partnered with NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA) to deliver a 5 day/week 4 hour peer-and-nurse-led primary health care service with a focus on hepatitis C to clients attending NUAA's peer-based needle and syringe program.

Description of model of care/intervention: A self-administered questionnaire was offered to all clients to assess satisfaction and knowledge of the peer-and-nurse-led model of care. Questions explored overall experience of the peer and the nurse, their knowledge of services provided and reason for attendance.

Effectiveness: An average of 12 clients per week attended the clinic and 22 clients completed the survey between January and February 2020 (data collection ongoing). Preliminary findings show respondents rated their overall experience with the peer and nurse as excellent (85% and 80%, respectively) or above average (10% and 15%, respectively). Almost all (99%) attendees knew the clinic offered testing and treatment for hepatitis C. Word of mouth was the commonest way people found out about the clinic. Confidentiality and the provision of a non-judgmental service were the two main reasons that clients attended the service. The convenience of a walk-in 'one-stop-shop' was also an important factor. Crucially, people stated that through the connection with the peer they had greater trust in the healthcare provided.

Conclusion and next steps: A peer-and-nurse-led collaborative model of care, can lead to improved access and greater trust in the healthcare system for clients who traditionally have felt excluded. These findings are important so we can continue to scale-up the peer- nurse partnership and to deliver an acceptable and equitable model of care. This model of care is important in maintain the trajectory towards elimination of hepatitis C.

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