

DROP-IN GROUP MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS (DIGMAS) CAN IMPROVE PATIENT ENGAGEMENT IN HEPATITIS C TREATMENT

Bandell J¹, Livsey K¹

¹Western Carolina University

Background: Despite the availability of curative treatments, multiple barriers exist in the health care system that prevent HCV treatment uptake by individuals, especially people who use drugs. This study evaluates the impact of a HCV treatment program within the primary care setting and discusses the impact of supportive group medical visits, enhanced care navigation, and health education on engagement and completion of treatment regardless of substance use status.

Description of model of care/ intervention: HCV treatment was offered through traditional office visits, DIGMAs or a combination of both. Patients who engaged in weekly HCV DIGMAs were provided clinical treatment, HCV education and peer support throughout the continuum of care. Clinical outcomes related to number and type of visits attended, number of patients completing treatment, and number achieving sustained virologic response at 12 weeks post-treatment (SVR12) were evaluated, and a post-treatment patient engagement survey was administered.

Effectiveness: Overall treatment completion rates (96%; 95% CI [92.4%, 99.6%]) and SVR12 rates (95%; 95% CI [89.1%, 100%]) showed no statistical outcomes difference based on substance use status. A statistically significant relationship existed between active injection drug users and uptake of group visits, $p= 0.05$. Group visits also significantly improved patient engagement ($p< 0.001$). Patients overwhelmingly intend to stay engaged in healthcare services following completion of treatment (94%).

Conclusion and next steps: No differences were found in HCV treatment outcomes based on substance use status or complex social circumstances. Innovative care models, such as DIGMAs, can support socially vulnerable patients through treatment and help achieve high SVR12 rates. Findings from this study further support that treatment should be offered to all clinically appropriate patients.

Disclosure of interest statement:

Dr. Bandell does not have any potential conflict of interest and did not receive any commercial funding in the development of this study.