

Hepatitis C elimination program in penitentiary establishments in Central Greece

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Background and Aims

Prisons are critical areas for elimination of hepatitis C due to the high burden of the disease. Prisoner populations are characterized by high rates of exposure to blood-borne viral infections such as HCV. The prevalence of HCV antibodies in Greek prisons is high, with one in fifteen inmates chronically infected. The aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of DAAs treatment in special population with chronic hepatitis C(CHC) in prison of Domokos in Central Greece.

Methods

Hepatitis C was initially screened and evaluated before treatment. At the first visit, 504 prisoners were tested with a rapid test for hepatitis C antibodies: anti-HCV (+): 52/504 (10.31%) At the second visit 25 of 52 (48%) prisoners were tested with phlebotomy for HCV-**RNA and genotype.**

Results

18 of 25 (72%) had HCV-RNA and genotype positive. Treatment with DAAs received 12 prisoners for 12 weeks.

Characteristics of patients HCV-RNA (+) n=18

- Average age: 40 (range 23 - 63) years
- Greek origin: 69.3%
- Average sentence: 14.8 years
- Duration of current imprisonment: 2.5 years
- Average number of prisons: 4
- Total length of imprisonment so far: 10.5 years
- Imprisonment for drug offenses:
 - current imprisonment: 25%
 - in total: 55.1%

Sustained virological response was achieved in 100% of those who received DAAs(12/12).

Conclusion

Screening and treatment of special groups population is essential for public health. All penitentiaries have to do test for antibodies (anti-HCV) in all of them detainees and in case of a positive result to followed by HCV RNA. The treatment with DAA's is too important and should be considered in all patients with chronic HCV infection. Without treating HCV in penitentiaries, eradication targets cannot to be achieved.

Future efforts should focus on building an accurate knowledge base and implementing education, policies and procedures for the prevention and treatment of hepatitis C in penitentiary populations.

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