

“FIVE STEPS” INTO THE TRIESTE INTEGRATE MODEL FOR TREATMENT OF HEPATITIS C IN PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS.

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Background: Italian reports show an increase of the users in Addiction Treatment Services (SerD) not tested for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). People who inject drugs (PWID) are the target with the highest prevalence of HCV (30%-60%), but still have reduced access to directly acting antivirals (DAA), due to lack of information, distrust in Health Services and in fragmented care programs. Specific skills are needed to establish a trust relationship with these patients and to promote motivation and collaboration. In this sense, SerD operators play a fundamental role.

Description of model of care/intervention: Our SerD introduced a novel 5-steps HCV Clinical Program composed by: (1) Universal screening of PWID, informative counseling and harm reduction in which the central role is played by the nurse; (2) HCV-RNA positive (HCV+) people are visited by the hospital specialist, who decides on drug therapy and monitoring. (3) Patients referred to the Liver Clinic or the Infective Disease Department; (4) People with a more severe addiction and with psychiatric comorbidity are accompanied by SerD staff to hospital appointments. To prevent drop outs, DAA therapy is managed differently depending on the personal degree of autonomy (Daily Observed Therapy); (5) Finally, to prevent reinfections, the follow-up is carried out in close collaboration between SerD and Hospital.

Effectiveness: Our novel Clinical Program produced an increase of HCV+ people treated with the DAA therapies. In 2015 and 2016 PWID patients treated were 7.3% (24 subjects), in 2017 they were 35.93% (96 subjects), in 2018 they were 86.58% (111 subjects). All treatments have been completed.

Conclusion and next steps: The integration between SerD and hospital specialists has made it possible to significantly increase the number of PWID subjects diagnosed, treated and subjected to informative counseling and harm reduction, to prevent the virus transmission and reinfection.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: Alessia Bassi has received consultancy fees from Gilead. The project “Dipartimento delle Dipendenze di Trieste: Sperimentazione di un Modello Organizzativo Integrato Ospedale-Territorio per la Prevenzione, Il Monitoraggio e la Cura di Pazienti con Dipendenza ed Epatite da HCV” has been partly founded by Gilead.