

HEPATITIS C: STIGMA INDICATORS AND PATIENT REPORTED OUTCOME MEASURES FOR DAA TREATMENT

Treloar C¹, Cama E¹, Brener L¹, Hopwood M¹, de Wit J¹, Madden A¹, Neale J²

¹Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW Sydney

²National Addiction Centre, Kings College London

Introduction: People living with hepatitis C (PLHCV) and people who inject drugs (PWID) commonly report experiencing stigma and discrimination, which can act as a barrier to health care access and treatment. This presentation will report on two projects (1) a national system to monitor experiences of stigma and discrimination among PLHCV and PWID; (2) “patient reported” experiences and outcomes of DAA treatment for PWID to examine factors beyond “cure” which could impact on treatment goals

Methods: (1) an online survey which measured experiences of stigma and discrimination using a brief indicator developed for this project; (2) Semi-structured interviews (n= 24) were conducted with four groups of PWID who live with HCV: (i) people who are considering DAA treatment; (ii) people who are currently undertaking DAA treatment; (iii) people who have completed DAA treatment (6-12 months post-treatment); (iv) people who have refused or delayed DAA treatment.

Results: (1) Among 153 PLHCV and PWID, past 12 month experiences of stigma and discrimination is common in relation to injecting drug use (54%) and hepatitis C (50%), 49% reported being treated negatively or differently to other people by health workers; (2) The outcomes of treatment noted as important by participants included: physical effects (less fatigue and feeling “more enthusiastic about life”); social connections (being able to consider intimate relationships and feeling more relaxed about HCV risk in interactions with family); and, changes in identity (feeling relieved to lose the HCV “label” as well as feeling “lost” without this identity). Provision of information was patchy, especially regarding post-treatment care.

Conclusion: Ongoing monitoring of stigma is important to identifying changes in trends over time and potential strategies to reduce experiences of stigma and discrimination. Factors beyond cure need to be considered in monitoring the experience and outcomes of HCV DAA treatment for people who inject drugs.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: None to disclose.