

THE ROAD TOWARDS ELIMINATION OF HEPATITIS C IN OSLO: CROSS-SECTIONAL PREVALENCE STUDIES IN 2018 AND 2021

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Background:

The prevalence of chronic HCV infection among people who inject drugs (PWID) in Oslo was 40-45% in the pre DAA era. Norway aims to eliminate HCV infection within 2023 with an ambitious goal of <5% viremic prevalence among PWID. The aim of the study was to monitor HCV RNA prevalence in cross-sectional samples of PWID in Oslo.

Methods:

Point prevalence studies were conducted in 2018 (August-September) and 2021 (September-November) among PWID attending low-threshold health services in downtown Oslo. Assessments included blood samples and a questionnaire about drug use. HCV RNA prevalence estimates with Clopper-Pearson exact 95% CIs were calculated for 2018 and 2021. Factors associated with detectable HCV RNA were analysed among participants in 2021 using logistic regression analysis.

Results:

A total of 291 and 264 participants were included in 2018 and 2021, respectively. The median age was 41 and 44 years, 74% and 73 % were male, and 75% and 79% reported recent (past 4 weeks) injecting drug use, respectively. HCV RNA prevalence decreased from 26.3% (95% CI 21.3-31.9) in 2018 (74 of 281) to 14.2% (95% CI 10.2-19) in 2021 (37 of 261). A significant decrease in HCV RNA prevalence was observed among individuals >40 years, those with >20 years of injecting, those who reported recent injecting drug use, and those who reported sharing of injecting equipment in the past four weeks (Figure). Detectable HCV RNA was associated with recent injecting drug use (OR 11.7; 95% CI 1.6-87.5). Anti-HCV/HCV RNA ratios decreased in all subgroups between 2018 and 2021.

Conclusion:

The substantial decrease in HCV RNA prevalence among PWID in Oslo observed between 2018 and 2021 is likely to be due to increased treatment uptake. Further increases in treatment uptake will be necessary to reach the Norwegian elimination goals.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

ØB has received lecture fees from Abbvie, MSD and Gilead. KU has received lecture fees from Abbvie, MSD and Gilead and research grant from Gilead. OD has received lecture fees from Abbvie and research grants from Abbvie and MSD. HM has received lecture fees from Abbvie, Gilead and MSD. No pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this study.

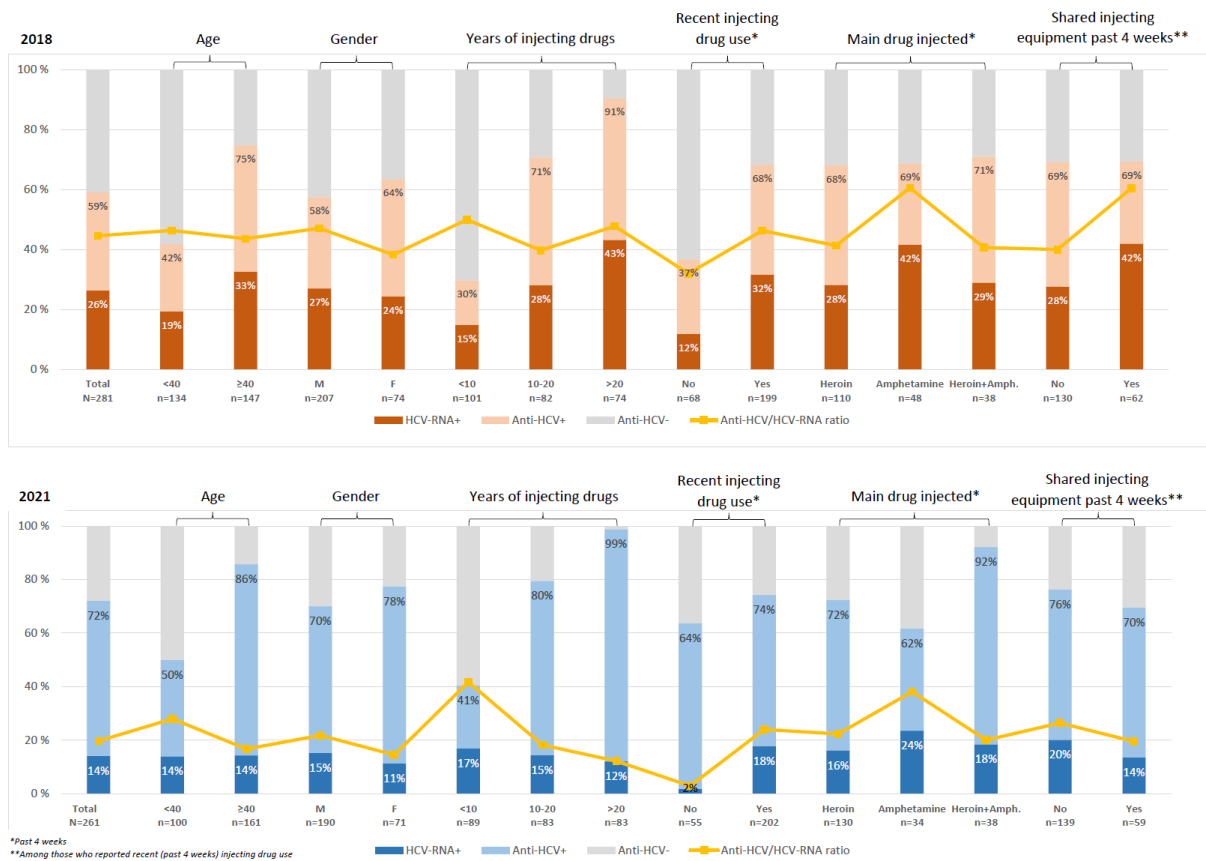


Figure. Proportions of people who inject drugs with detectable HCV RNA and anti-HCV in 2018 (red) and 2021 (blue) according to different subgroups. Anti-HCV/HCV RNA ratios are shown in yellow.