

## LINKAGE TO HEPATITIS C TREATMENT IN TWO OPIOID SUBSTITUTION TREATMENT UNITS

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### **Background:**

Among patients in the oral substitution treatment (OST) programme at the addiction unit of Sahlgrenska University Hospital, the majority have been infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV). In 2017, an initiative was taken to link patients to HCV treatment by increasing testing for HCV as well as performing Fibrosan<sup>®</sup> assessment on site at the addiction unit, bypassing the need for patients to attend the Clinic of Infectious diseases. This retrospective study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of this intervention.

### **Methods:**

In total 225 patients from two OST units were included in this study during 2017. Nurses got basic education on HCV infection in risk groups. HCV testing was performed and a nurse and physician from the Clinic of Infectious diseases attended the OST unit. One year after end of study (December 31<sup>st</sup> 2018) data was extracted from medical records.

### **Results:**

At baseline, 133/225 (59%) patients had antibodies against HCV, of whom 88 (66%) were HCV RNA positive. Fibrosan<sup>®</sup> was performed in 29 patients, most of whom had to wait for DAA treatment due to restrictions (only F2 or higher eligible for treatment during 2017). The majority had mild fibrosis, stage F0-F2. Treatment restrictions were lifted on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 and in total 33 patients (37.5%) had been treated with DAA or were still receiving treatment at follow-up. Additional patients were waiting for a treatment decision.

### **Conclusion:**

Increased testing and linkage to HCV treatment enrolled 33 patients into treatment. The results show that more patients than those included in the intervention were enrolled in treatment. This was probably due to increased awareness of hepatitis C among staff at OST units and increased collaboration between clinics after end of intervention.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The authors have not received any contributions from commercial partners relevant for this work.