

Never fear- polar is here; a nationally available tool for chronic hepatitis c management in general practice

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Background: In 2016, 0.91% of the population of Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network (CESPHN) region were living with Chronic Hepatitis C infection (CHC).

While CHC without cirrhosis is well managed in primary care, this option has low uptake with only 100 people having received primary care treatment in the region (2020 data). The *Clinical Audit in Viral Hepatitis (CAViH)* project aims to support general practice to identify and manage CHC in primary care. In December 2021, the project released a CHC audit tool for Beta testing in two general practices in the CESPHN catchment.

Analysis: *CAViH* has developed CHC algorithms for the web-based POLAR in-practice auditing tool from Outcome Health. The POLAR tool extracts information from general practice software that is translated to identify opportunities to improve linkage to care for patients living with CHC.

Outcome: In December 2021, POLAR CHC reports were released for Beta testing. General practices with POLAR (free licence through CESPHN) can identify patients with one or more CHC risk factors (screening) or for follow-up care of known CHC (management). Relevant clinical information (ALTs, APRI score, cirrhosis, DAA history, antibody & PCR results., AFP, previous referral information, co-morbidities) is also provided in an easy-to-read form to aid in management. The tool can also identify patients with risk factors for advanced liver disease. A shared-care program is running in several GP clinics in CESPHN to assist GPs in screening and management.

Applications: This tool has been developed and tested to assist general practice to better manage patients who have, or are at risk of, CHC from a whole of practice perspective. The tool facilitates analysis of routinely collected data and may enhance liaison and linkages between specialist and primary care.

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