

## INCREASING LINKAGE TO HCV CARE FOLLOWING TRAUMA-INFORMED REHABILITATION: AN EDUCATION AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AMONG WOMEN

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**Background:** Women infected with HCV may have difficulty accessing healthcare. From 2019-2020 our team provided HCV testing and treatment in a residential trauma-informed drug treatment centre for women in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. However, many were lost to follow-up upon leaving the centre. The aim of this work was to evaluate an HCV educational program and determine women's preferences to receive follow-up care.

**Methods:** From October 2021 to April 2022, a 30-minute educational session was delivered, followed by a questionnaire. The questionnaire included demographics, interest in general healthcare, preferred contact methods, motivators for seeking care, HCV, and an evaluation of the education session.

**Results:** Seven groups of 8-19 women attended the session, with a 78% uptake for survey completion, for a total of 62 women. Median age was 34. Of those surveyed, 88.5% identified that they struggle with drug or alcohol dependence; 83% with mental health challenges; and 67% had never been in a drug treatment prior. Most (88%) identified their primary mechanism to receive healthcare is a primary care provider, but 68% preferred to work with a case worker familiar with their history. Most stated a preference for contact via text (65%), followed by e-mail (35%). Gift cards were identified as an incentive (73%), as was providers being non-judgmental (88%) and responsive to questions (71%). 72% of women reported having been tested for HCV in the past, and while 64% had no concerns about treatment, 28% stated the lack of symptoms made it less of a priority. After the education session, most respondents expressed increased motivation to seek HCV care (80%) and increased knowledge of risk factors and treatment (83%).

**Conclusion:** Although collection is ongoing, our data suggest that there may be preferred mechanisms for women leaving rehabilitation to be engaged for both general, as well as HCV care.

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