

HEPATITIS C VIRUS PREVALENCE FROM 2010-2015 AMONG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING UNSTABLE HOUSING IN A POPULATION-BASED DATA LINKAGE STUDY

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Background:

Unstable housing has been found to increase risk of acquisition of hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection. Methods to estimate people experiencing unstable housing on a population level are lacking. To address this limitation, we developed an algorithm to identify people experiencing unstable housing using administrative health data, and determined the HCV prevalence among this population.

Methods:

We used the British Columbia (BC) Hepatitis Testers Cohort (HTC), which includes all individuals tested for or diagnosed with HCV in BC since January 1st, 1996 (~1.7 million people), linked to prescription drugs, medical visits, hospitalizations, and mortality data until December 31st, 2015. International Classification of Diseases (ICD) versions 9 and 10 codes associated with unstable housing were identified in the literature. We assessed the number of people from 2010-2015 with ≥ 2 encounters where any unstable housing-related ICD 9/10 codes appeared in that year. Among those experiencing unstable housing each year, anti-HCV prevalence since 1996 was determined.

Results:

The number of people each year experiencing unstable housing increased from 2,691 to 11,296 from 2010 to 2015 (Figure 1). A lower proportion of males (50%) and people aged over 55 years (36%) was observed among those experiencing unstable housing in 2015, compared to 2010. HCV prevalence among people experiencing unstable housing decreased each year (from 19% to 13%). In 2015, the HCV prevalence among people experiencing unstable housing in BC was 13.05%, equating to 8,577 people; approximately 17% of all people diagnosed with HCV living in the province at that time.

Conclusion:

These findings indicate that HCV infection is highly prevalent among people experiencing unstable housing in BC. Reasons for the decline in HCV prevalence among people experiencing unstable housing in the BC-HTC require further investigation, as well as additional work to better understand the profile & characteristics of people experiencing unstable housing who are diagnosed with HCV infection.

Disclaimer and disclosure of Interest Statement:

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Figure 1.

