

A Community Based Hepatitis C Treatment Programme in Edinburgh, Scotland

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Background:

In Lothian, Scotland all Hepatitis C (HCV) assessment and treatment has historically been delivered via secondary care services, which have a high “non attendance” rate. Many of the barriers to HCV treatment have now gone: treatment is shorter in duration with minimal side effects and better treatment outcomes. In order to improve treatment uptake we liaised with a local GP surgery that has a number of HCV positive patients who had not attended the hospital service but attend the GP surgery for opiate substitute prescriptions or other routine medical care.

Description of model of care/intervention:

Our aim was to move our HCV service from secondary to primary care, thus improving treatment accessibility. We developed a shared care protocol with a GP with a special interest in HCV. The GP is responsible for assessing patients and carrying out baseline investigations. Fibro scans can be carried out either at the GP clinic or in secondary care. All individual cases were discussed at a weekly MDT which the GP attended in person or via tele conference.

Effectiveness:

Attendance at the GP primary care clinic has been good. Since the clinic commenced in October 2017, out of 28 HCV positive patients, two have completed treatment, five are currently on treatment, one has been approved for treatment but hasn't yet started and a further four are attending the clinic for assessment.

Conclusion and next steps:

This shared care protocol has helped to improve the uptake of HCV treatment in a patient group who were not accessing HCV services. The clinic was also an opportunity to discuss other aspects of health related to HCV such as alcohol and drug use, and to ensure appropriate support and/or referrals. We hope that this model can be replicated in other GP surgeries in Lothian.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: See example below:

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