

DYNAMICS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS IN PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS BY HEPATITIS C VIRUS INFECTION STATUS: PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF THE HEPKO STUDY, MONTREAL, CANADA

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Background:

There is a knowledge gap in the interplay between hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection and mental health in people who inject drugs (PWID). This analysis aimed to explore the dynamics of psychological distress according to changes in HCV infection status in PWID.

Methods:

PWID participating in an ongoing cohort (HEPCO) between March 2011 to March 2020 were considered and those with at least two visits experiencing HCV RNA switches were included. The switches were i) detection of HCV RNA after a visit without detectable HCV RNA (HCV infection), and ii) undetectable HCV RNA after a visit with HCV RNA detection (HCV clearance). Psychological distress was evaluated every 3 months using Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10). The K10 score in the post-switch visit was compared to the K10 in the pre-switch visit using the Wilcoxon signed rank test.

Results:

A total of 167 participants experiencing 280 switches (infection, 124 and clearance, 156) were included in the analysis. Among 124 infection switches, The K10 score was not significantly different between post- and pre-switch visits in both sub-groups: HCV infection [median (IQR): 21.0 (11.8) vs. 20.0 (13.0); P=0.528] and HCV clearance [median (IQR): 19.0 (12.0) vs. 19.5 (11.0); P=0.517]. Similar results were obtained when only the first switch was included for the 167 participants.

Conclusion:

This study suggests that HCV transitions in and out of infection do not play a major role in changes in the levels of psychological distress.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None.