

Tasmanian Eliminate Hepatitis C Australian Outreach Project (TEHCAO)

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Background/Approach: The Tasmanian Eliminate Hepatitis C Australian Outreach Project (TEHCAO) commenced in May 2020 and has been providing community based, nurse-led hepatitis C care. The TEHCAO project provides hepatitis C virus (HCV) education, and linkage to testing and treatment opportunities for priority populations in Tasmania with the aim of providing access to HCV care in settings with no established testing and treatment pathways.

Analysis/Argument: Drop-in outreach clinics are offered at six NSP settings across Tasmania to increase access to hepatitis C care for people who are at-risk. The TEHCAO project has partnered with State-wide Mental Health Services (SMHS) to establish HCV screening and treatment pathways for all clients of this service. Treatment plans for clients of SMHS are individually designed to incorporate clients' specific needs, which will be presented through case studies.

Outcomes/Results: In the NSP setting, the outreach nurse has provided HCV education to 505 clients. 241 venepunctures have been performed, of which 22 (9%) clients have tested HCV RNA positive. Among the 22 HCV RNA positive clients, 19 (86%) have commenced treatment. 18 clients have been identified as HCV RNA positive through the SMHS partnership, of which 100% have commenced treatment. Eight referrals have been received through Sexual Health Services for HCV RNA positive clients, of which six (75%) have commenced treatment. Overall, 48 clients have been identified through the TEHCAO project, of which 44 (92%) clients have commenced treatment.

Conclusions/Applications: The TEHCAO project provides person-centred, flexible hepatitis C care in priority settings. The advantage of outreach clinics is that care is provided in environments that are familiar and convenient to clients. The TEHCAO nurse works with clients to identify and reduce barriers to hepatitis C care. This individualised care has been effective in identifying people living with hepatitis C and assisting them to commence treatment.

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