

A NEW MODEL OF CARE FOR HCV ELIMINATION IN PWUD IN THE BALEARIC ISLANDS, SPAIN

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Background:

To reach the 2030 hepatitis C virus (HCV) elimination goal set by the World Health Organization, a new model of care with simplified pathways catered to people who use drugs (PWUD) attending addiction services centres (ASCs) on the Balearic Islands, Spain, has been implemented since April 2021.

Description of model of care/intervention:

The model (Figure) has been implemented in 16 of 17 ASCs serving the islands and consists of four phases: 1) recruitment and HCV screening onsite via anti-HCV antibody testing (Oraquick[®]) and dried blood spot (DBS) testing to confirm viremia (HCV-RNA); 2) treatment prescription via telemedicine and repackaging to facilitate its dispensing in the ASCs; 3) linkage to specialist care through new communication channels between ASC professionals and hospitals; and 4) sustained virological response (SVR) monitoring onsite via DBS at 4 and 12 weeks after treatment completion.

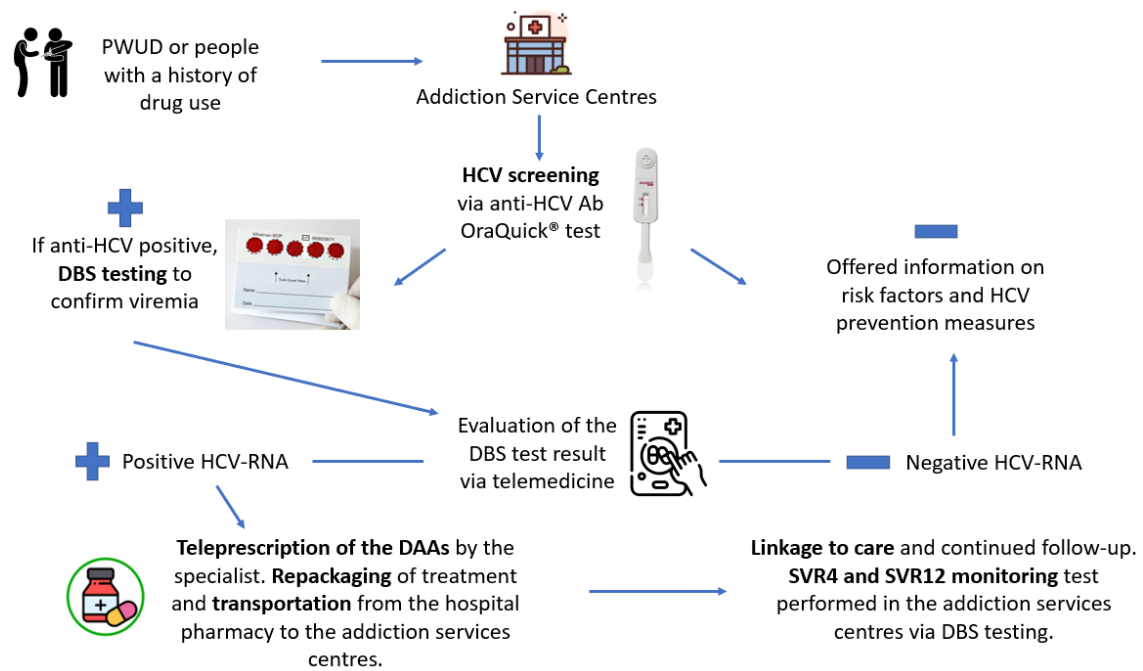
Effectiveness:

Of 626 patients, 234 (37%) were anti-HCV+ and 92 (15%) HCV-RNA+. Of those HCV-RNA+ (mean age 46.6 [SD: 8.83]) 65 (71%) were men, 79 (86%) were Spanish-born, 84 (91%) reported a previous HCV diagnosis, 21 (23%) reported previous HCV treatment and 15 (16%) had an HIV co-infection. Of those HCV-RNA+, 73 (79%) have started treatment, 19 (21%) are pending its initiation and 52 (57%) have completed it. SVR4 and SVR12 monitoring tests were performed in 33 (63%) and 19 (37%) patients who completed treatment, respectively; 91% (n=30) and 95% (n=18) of the SVR4 and SVR12 monitoring tests showed undetectable HCV-RNA, respectively. Five (1%) patients abandoned the project.

Conclusion and next steps:

Decentralising HCV diagnosis, prescription and treatment dispensing makes it easier for PWUD attending ASCs to complete the HCV care cascade and achieve SVR. Strategies which simplify the cascade for PWUD are effective in helping eliminate HCV in this key population. Next steps include continuing participant recruitment, treatment and monitoring.

Figure:
Figure: HCV model of care catered to PWUD in the Balearic Islands



Abbreviations: Ab, antibody; DAA, direct-acting antivirals; DBS, dried blood spot; HCV, hepatitis C virus; PWUD, people who use drugs; SVR, sustained viral response.

Disclosure of interest statement:

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