

USE OF ROUTINE HEPATITIS NOTIFICATION DATA TO SUPPORT DAA TREATMENT UPTAKE IN NEW SOUTH WALES

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Background: NSW Health has set a target to eliminate hepatitis C (HCV) in New South Wales (NSW) by 2028. The use of routine notification data to support direct acting antiviral (DAA) treatment uptake has been proposed as one strategy. Positive HCV tests, including antibody and qualitative and quantitative RNA tests, are notified to NSW Health under public health legislation. The presence of HCV RNA indicates current infection and eligibility for DAA treatment. However, it is unclear if clinicians who are ordering RNA tests are those already routinely treating or referring patients for treatment. To determine the feasibility and utility of following up clinicians based on RNA notifications, a survey of HCV treatment practices among NSW non-specialist clinicians was conducted.

Methods: All HCV RNA notifications for NSW residents with a specimen collection date from 15 January to 15 February 2019 were extracted from the NSW notifiable conditions database. NSW Health staff attempted to contact all ordering doctors not known to be experienced DAA prescribers to administer a telephone questionnaire. The questionnaire ascertained the treatment status of the notified case and the provider's usual approaches to the treatment, management, and referral of patients with chronic hepatitis C. Information was also sought on what type of support would enable the provider to prescribe DAA treatment.

Results: The results of the survey will be presented and inform a discussion of the most effective notification-based strategies to support the uptake of DAA treatment.

Conclusion: The use of HCV notification data to increase DAA coverage is a novel approach. This survey will provide evidence on the utility of one method of using public health data to assist in the elimination of HCV, and may indicate a need for further research to assess alternative strategies such as follow-up of positive antibody results without a subsequent RNA notification.

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