

Keep Your Foot On The Pedal! Kombi Clinic Leads HCV Re-Elimination at Lotus Glen Correctional Centre

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Background/Approach: Clearance of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) in corrections is crucial to HCV Elimination. Partnership with strategic players is fundamental to achieving this goal. In 2017, HCV Elimination was demonstrated in Lotus Glen Correctional Centre in Far North Queensland. As is the nature of this virus, sustained efforts must be continued, so we approached Lotus Glen with a simplified, rapid and accessible testing plan.

Analysis/Argument: Leading a collaborative partnership, Kombi Clinic conducted a HCV Point of Care Testing (PoCT) blitz in October 2021. With the advent of Cepheid's GeneXpert® PoCT for HCV RNA we moved four machines between differing prison units, allowing testing of 16 samples per hour with access to all.

Outcome/Results: Over five days interrupted by multiple musters, lockdowns and codes, we were able to fingerstick test 423 men representing 44% of the prison population. 10.4% tested positive (n=44) and all were prescribed their DAA by end of the fifth testing day. Of those testing HCV positive, 97% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, 77% were currently injecting and 25% had previously been treated.

Conclusions/Applications: Fingerstick HCV PoCT blitz in corrections is a huge game changer, especially when treatment is commenced within days of diagnosis. This unique model is planned for roll out to four other Queensland correctional facilities in early 2022.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: GeneXpert machines and cartridges were provided free of charge by Gilead Sciences Pty. Ltd. via a pilot point-of-care testing program.