

ESTIMATION OF THE CASCADE OF HCV TESTING, CARE AND TREATMENT AMONG ACTIVE PWID ATTENDING HARM-REDUCTION CENTERS IN CATALONIA (HepCdetect II Study)



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Background



Catalonia (Spain):

- ❖ There is a network of harm reduction services, including 16 harm reduction centers (HRC) among other services.
- ❖ Approximately 6000 people who inject drugs (PWID) attended this network in 2017.
- ❖ Most HRC offer the rapid HCV antibody (Ab) test.
- ❖ However, HRC users still face numerous barriers to access healthcare services for hepatitis C diagnosis confirmation and treatment.

We aimed to estimate key stages of the HCV cascade among PWID who attend HRC in Catalonia.

Results

❖ Characteristics of study participants and HCV testing results (N=410).

Participants were mostly male (85.4%) of Spanish origin (72.0%), with an average age of 40 years and 17.7 years of injection (20.0% with ≤5 years of injection).

Among them, 94.3% had previously been HCV screened, 79.8% tested Ab positive, and 58.5% tested RNA positive. Additionally considering self-reported information on care and treatment, 19.6% (n=64) had spontaneous HCV clearance (Ab positive, undetectable RNA and no reported HCV treatment), and 65.4% (n=263) were RNA positive or cured with treatment.

Among the latter, 33.1% had ever started treatment, and 23.5% had been cured by treatment, but only 28 (10.6%) tested RNA negative on dried blood spots.

❖ Estimated cascade of HCV testing, care, and treatment (N=2258).

When the proportions previously observed in the study population were extrapolated to the total population of PWID attending these four centers, the cascade shown in **Figure 1** was estimated.

Methods

- ❖ A cross-sectional study of active PWID (N=410) was performed in 2016-2017 in **four HRC caring for 2258 people**, which represents 37,6% of all PWID in Catalonia.

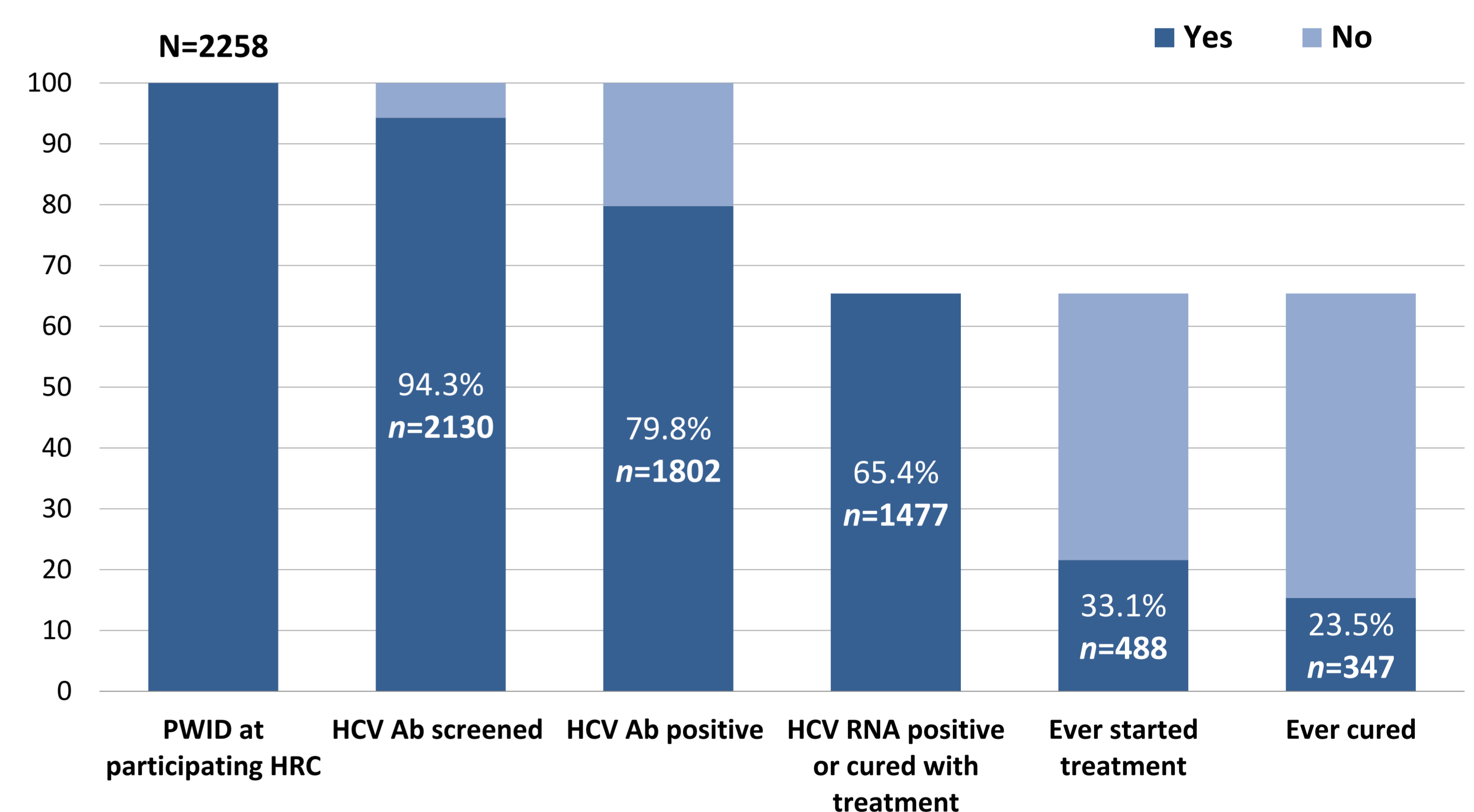
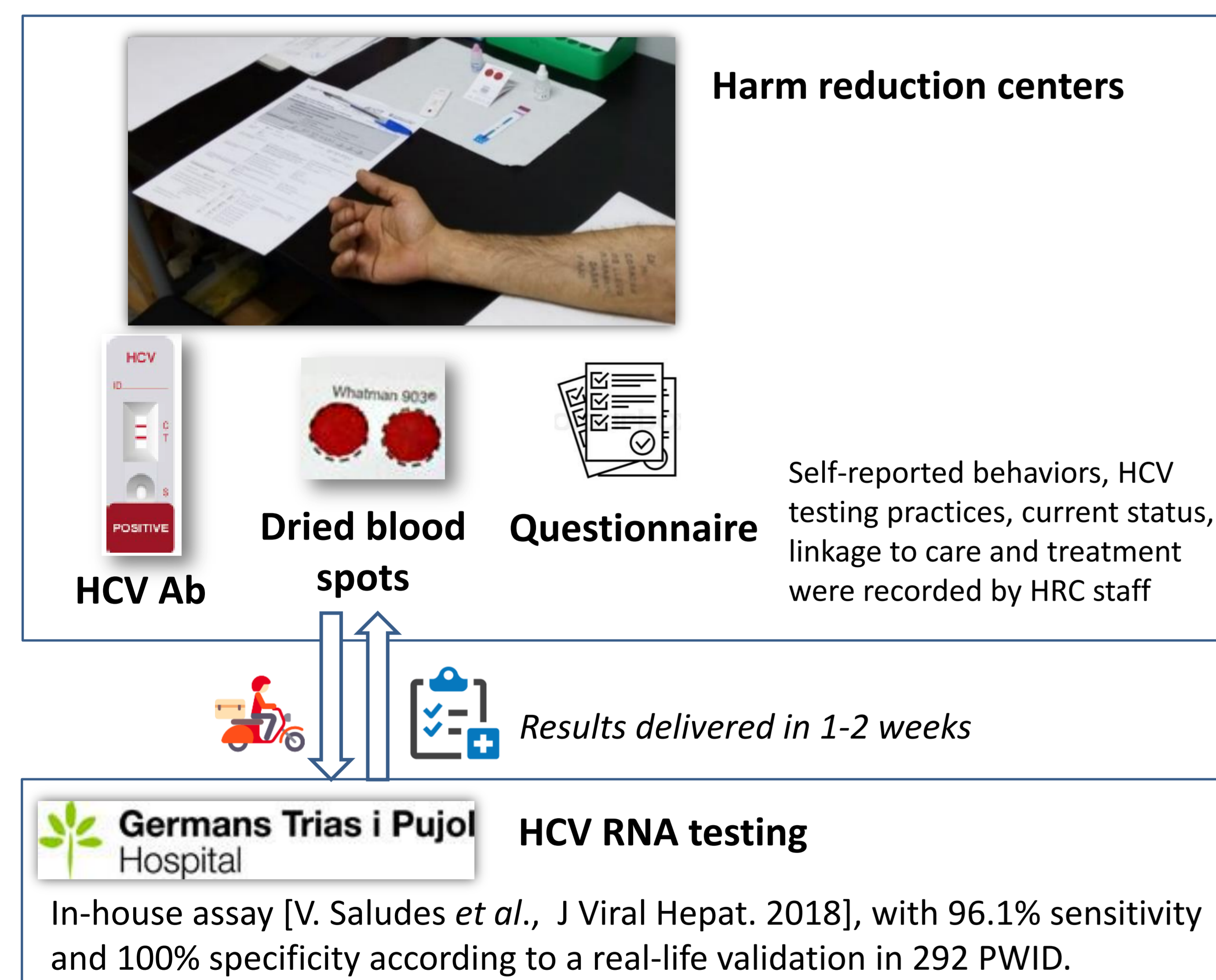


Figure 1. Estimated cascade of HCV testing, care and treatment among PWID attending four HRC in Catalonia. The proportion of antibody screened and antibody positive was referred to the total number of PWID. The proportions of treated and cured were referred to the total number of HCV-RNA positive or cured by treatment.

According to RNA testing results obtained from DBS, it was estimated that only 156/1477 (10.6%) of those who had ever been in need for treatment were RNA negative. Thus, among all PWID attending these four centers, 1321/2258 (58.5%) were still living with HCV and in need for treatment, 35.9% being unaware of it.

Conclusions

- ❖ This pilot study provides the first estimates of the HCV cascade among PWID in Catalonia, and highlights the potential benefit of:
 - i) DBS testing at HRC to improve diagnosis rates of viremic infection, and
 - ii) decentralized treatment in the HRC setting to improve treatment rates.
- ❖ This methodology will be used to estimate the HCV cascade among PWID in the whole region of Catalonia and generate crucial data for the recently developed Catalan Hepatitis C Plan in order to achieve WHO elimination goals.

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