**Title**

The challenge of hepatitis C case finding in General Practice

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**Background**

The listing of highly effective Direct Acting Antivirals (DAAs) for the treatment of hepatitis C virus (HCV) on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, with no disease stage restrictions, enabled 30,434 people to be cured of HCV in 2016.[[1]](#footnote-1) Importantly, the proportion of individuals prescribed DAAs by General Practitioners (GPs) increased from 8% in March 2016 to 31% in December 2016.[[2]](#footnote-2) However, treatment uptake has been declining since the initial large cohort of people living with HCV has been treated. An estimated 19% of Australians living with chronic HCV have not been diagnosed.1

**Aims**

This session will explore various strategies GPs can implement in their practices to find undiagnosed cases of HCV and ways to re-engage patients who have previously been diagnosed with HCV infection, but have not considered treatment. These approaches involve screening in new and existing patients. Current published data on HCV treatment uptake and outcomes in primary care will be reviewed.

**Method**

The importance of screening priority populations, such as people who inject drugs or have ever injected drugs, and other people with risk factors or clinical indications will be highlighted. HCV case finding strategies proposed will include initiating discussions regarding HCV testing with patients as part of routine history-taking, use of software recall and reminder systems and undertaking a retrospective case audit of patients in the practice.

**Results**

Not applicable

**Conclusion**

GPs are increasingly involved in curing HCV. This session provides guidance and tools that support GPs to case find patients with undiagnosed HCV so they can be treated, thereby reducing the prevalence of HCV in the community and ongoing transmission of HCV.

1. The Kirby Institute. HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia, Annual Surveillance Report 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Kirby Institute. Monitoring hepatitis C treatment uptake in Australia (Issue 7). The Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, Australia, July 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)