

TASMANIAN ELIMINATE HEPATITIS C AUSTRALIAN OUTREACH PROJECT (TEHCAO)

Authors:

HUGHES M¹, MOORE K¹, DAWE J², RICHMOND J², OWEN L¹, On behalf of the EC Australia Partnership.

¹Tasmanian Health Service, State-wide Sexual Health Services, Hobart, Australia, ²Burnet Institute, Melbourne, Australia.

megan.hughes@ths.tas.gov.au

Background/Approach: The Tasmanian Eliminate Hepatitis C Australian Outreach (TEHCAO) project provides community-based, nurse-led Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) education, testing and treatment opportunities for priority populations in Tasmania. Prior to the establishment of this project the HCV care pathways were situated in tertiary hospitals. The TEHCAO nurses are currently working with correctional health, State-wide Mental Health Services (SMHS) and a network of Needle and Syringe Programs (NSP).

Analysis/Argument: The project commenced in May 2020 with service mapping and a needs assessment to identify gaps in HCV service delivery and invite health services to participate in the TEHCAO project. Participating health services were engaged in a codesign process to develop nurse-led interventions, including provision of on-site HCV clinical services, and/or education/workforce development activities. Data collection processes were established to capture all nursing and/or testing and treatment activity.

Outcome/Results: By the end of January 2021, a weekly nurse-led testing clinic has operated at 3 NSPs in Southern Tasmania. Over 27 weeks, 198 NSP clients participated in HCV brief interventions, 57 clients received venepuncture, four were HCV RNA positive and two have commenced/completed treatment. The TEHCAO nurse provided workforce development for SMHS for 157 participants. Subsequently, three SMHS clients have commenced treatment. Routine screening of all SMHS clients will commence in February 2021. A capacity development approach has been implemented in correctional health, 33 staff have participated in targeted workforce development and universal HCV reflexive testing upon entry has been implemented.

Conclusions/Applications:

The TEHCAO project is delivering patient-centred, community-based, nurse-led interventions in various services in Tasmania. Each service requires an individualised approach to address HCV. Rigorous data collection has allowed the impact of nurse-led activities to be monitored and the effectiveness of these models can be assessed.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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