

Hepatitis C elimination progress in Perth

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Background/Approach: Perth in Western Australia is not yet on track to achieve hepatitis C elimination. National goals suggest that, by 2030, 90% of people living with hepatitis C who are diagnosed should have an RNA test, and 85% of people living with hepatitis C should be cured. Boorloo (Perth) Public Health Unit (Boorloo PHU) completed a pilot program of enhanced follow-up for hepatitis C cases in 2023, which improved treatment uptake and was cost-effective. The pilot has now been expanded and integrated into routine care.

Analysis/Argument: We present a point in time assessment of Perth's hepatitis C elimination progress. Among people notified with hepatitis C between 1 January 2023 and 30 September 2025 (excluding prison diagnoses), the proportion who had an RNA test and the proportion of RNA-positive cases who received treatment are described. We estimate the impact of our active, multidisciplinary follow-up program on these metrics. Finally, we summarise the barriers for those who have not yet engaged in hepatitis C care.

Outcome/Results: In 2.75 years of program activity, 1173 notified hepatitis C cases were followed up in the Perth community. Of these, 1140 (97.2%) had RNA testing. Boorloo PHU helped to facilitate 298 (25.4%) of these tests. Of 499 cases eligible for antiviral treatment, 380 (76.2%) were treated, with 77 (15.4%) treated due to Boorloo PHU interventions. There remain 33 cases (2.8%) who have not yet had an RNA test, and 119 eligible cases (23.8%) who are not yet treated. Diverse barriers to care were identified including socioeconomic complexities, transitions of care and comorbidities.

Conclusions/Applications: Boorloo PHU's active follow-up of people notified for hepatitis C has successfully bridged gaps in care, facilitating RNA testing rates that exceed the 2030 targets, and bringing treatment targets within reach. Care transitions and culturally sensitive patient engagement remain key focus areas.