

Mental Health Consumers Have Low Hepatitis C Knowledge, but Support Routine Hepatitis C Care: Results from an Interview Conducted in Six Australian Inpatient Units

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BACKGROUND

- Mental health services are a recommended setting for HCV testing and treatment, but rates are low.
- Few studies have explored consumer perspectives on receiving HCV care in mental health services.

METHODS

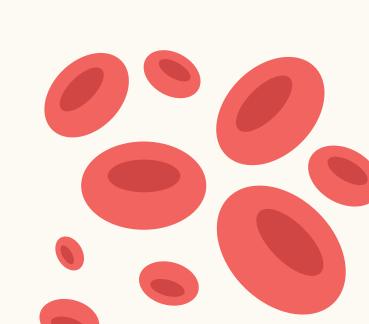
-  60 mental health consumers
-  Semi-structured interviews on HCV knowledge and care
-  November to December 2024
-  Six mental health inpatient units in Hunter New England Local Health District, NSW

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

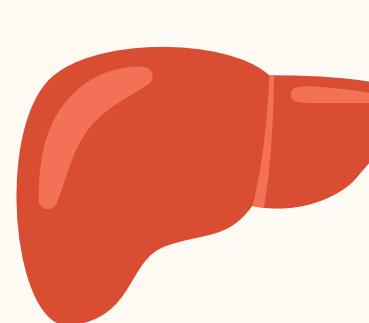
- Mental health consumers are open to HCV care in inpatient settings, but barriers and preferences need to be considered.

FINDINGS

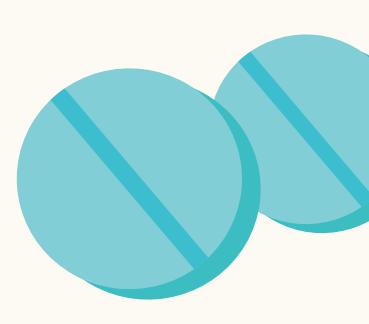
Low HCV Knowledge



38% of consumers knew that HCV is transmitted via blood-to-blood contact



33% of consumers knew that HCV affects the liver



25% of consumers knew that HCV is treated by oral medication

Positive Perceptions of HCV Care

● Agree ● Disagree

Believe HCV testing should be routine in mental health units

Comfortable talking to mental health staff about HCV

Would accept HCV treatment during admission

Confident in ability to complete HCV treatment

Would be supported by friends/family during HCV treatment

Know how to access HCV treatment

60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100
% of Consumers

Five Themes for Barriers, Facilitators, and Preferences of HCV Care

1. Mental health units are an opportunistic and supportive setting for HCV care



"Yeah, you're getting monitored by the hospital. You're already at the hospital. So, you've got everything on location."

2. Stigma and privacy concerns

"When the nurses do blood pressure, for example, they don't...always go away from other patients to do it."



3. Individual differences contribute to varied care preferences



"I want to receive the best care... and that includes some things that you're not very educated about. For example, hep C."

4. Education to promote HCV awareness

"Like maybe just a sign explaining what hep C [is]...would be really nice to learn more about it."



5. Importance of follow-up care



"A lot of people I know don't even take their...medication anyway...so they need someone, a social worker to check in on them, even just by phone."