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Hepatitis C incidence among primary care patients, 2009–2020

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on behalf of EC Partnership and ACCESS.

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Background

- New Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) infections are measured by incidence
- Therefore incidence can evaluate if strategies to prevent new infections have worked
- One such strategy in Australia is the large ongoing investment in increasing access to direct-acting antivirals in 2016, which is available in primary care settings

Aims

- Estimate HCV incidence
- Describe incidence trends over time
- Estimate HCV incidence among patients accessing opioid-related pharmacotherapy, because they are a priority population in the response to hepatitis C in Australia

Methods

Setting

- Australian Collaboration for Coordinated Enhanced Sentinel Surveillance of Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs) and Blood Borne Viruses (BBVs, ACCESS)
- 12 health services; Victoria, Australia; 2009–2020

Patients

- Negative HCV antibody test as their first test recorded
- At least one subsequent HCV antibody and/or HCV RNA test

Methods

Incidence

- Positive HCV antibody or HCV RNA test
- Total number of incident HCV infections/total person-years of follow-up

ORP prescription

- An electronic medical record of prescription for medicines known to be used for pharmacotherapy (methadone or buprenorphine) was recorded in ACCESS between 1 January 2009 and 31 December 2020

Results



6,711 patients

32 years on average

61% women

8% history of opioid-related pharmacotherapy

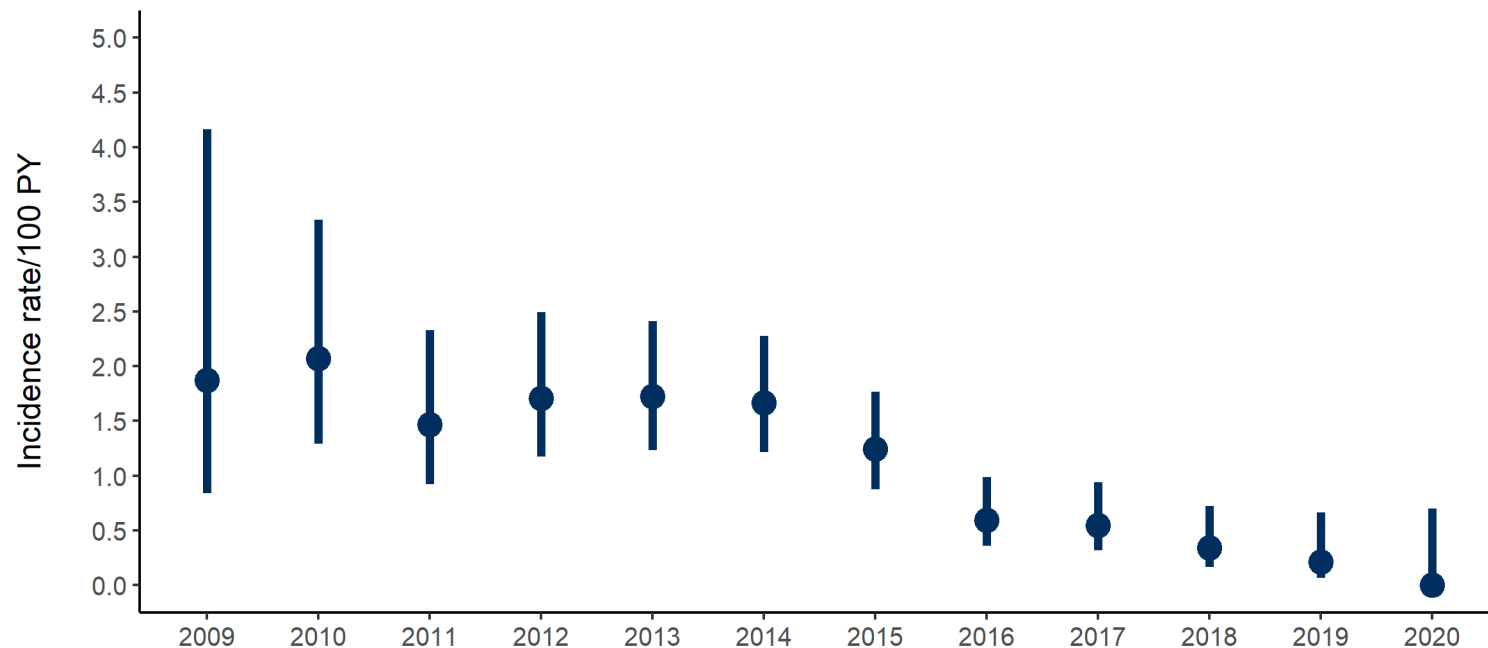


17,098 HCV antibody/RNA tests

210 incident HCV infections

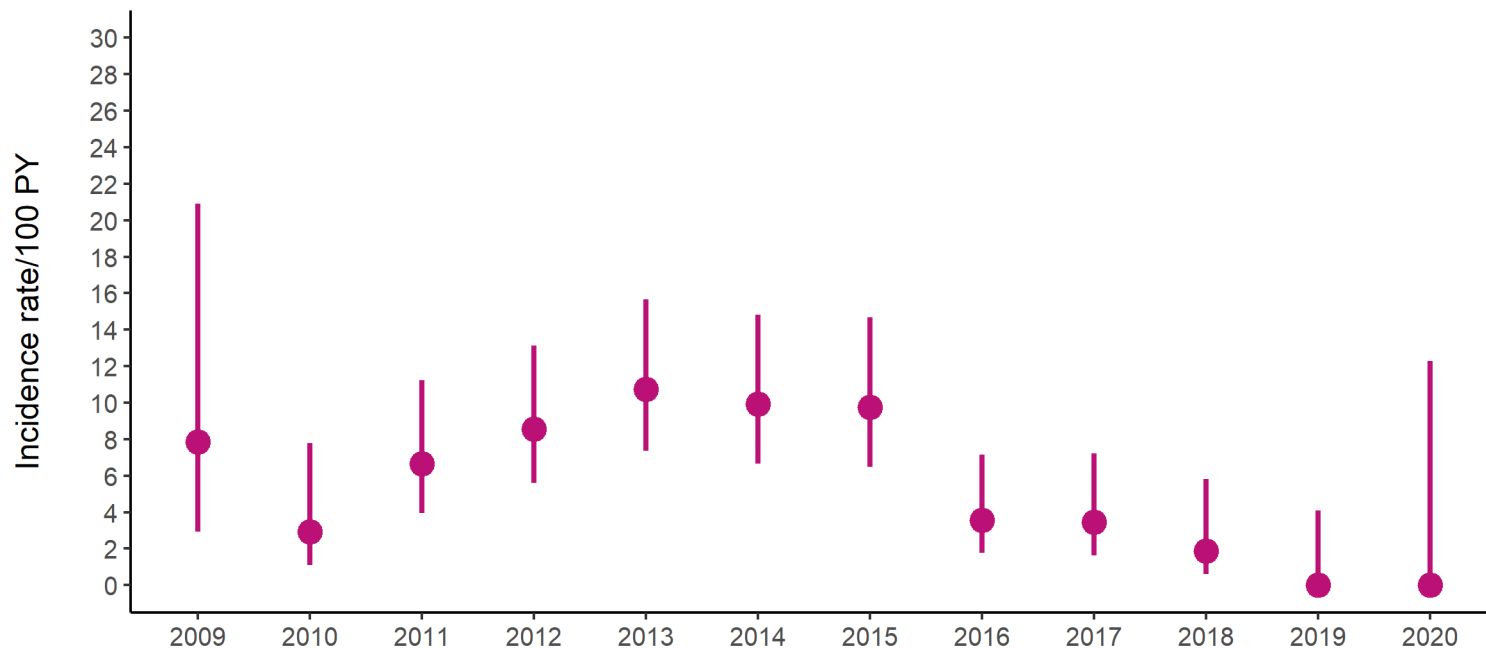
19,566 person-years

HCV incidence by year



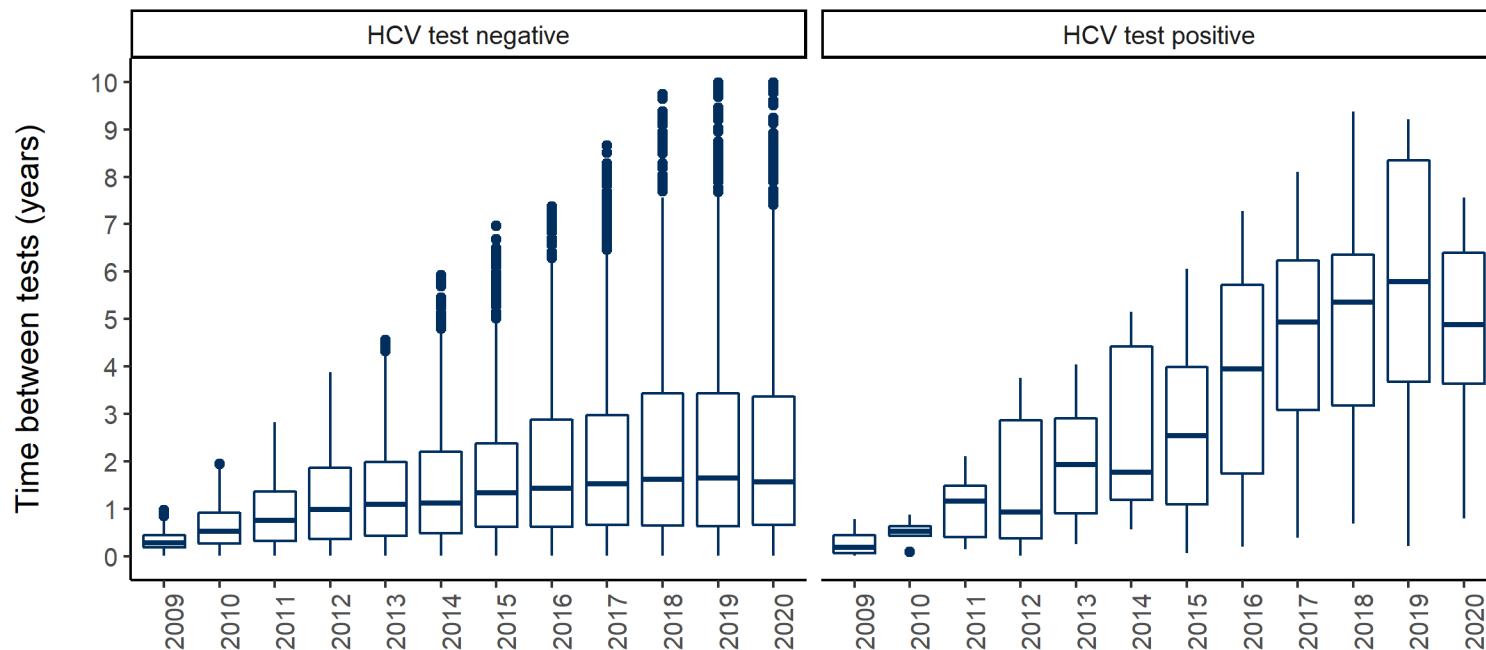
N= 6,711

HCV incidence among patients with a history of ORP



n=559

Time (years) since previous test by HCV test result



Discussion

Key findings

- Incidence had declined, including among patients with a history of pharmacotherapy

Limitations

- Health-care seeking and accessing patient population

Implications

- Patients accessing pharmacotherapy should continue to be supported to access hepatitis C testing, treatment and care, in settings that are convenient and acceptable

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