

## HEPATITIS C ELIMINATION: A NATIONWIDE PROGRAMME FOR PERSONS WHO USE DRUGS (PWUD) UNDER OPIATE SUBSTITUTION TREATMENT (OST) IN GREECE. THE “TITYOS” PROJECT

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### Background

In Greece hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection has been estimated to affect about 70.000 individuals, while anti-HCV seroprevalence exceeds 70% in PWUD. Increasing access to treatment for PWUD is a core component of the HCV elimination strategy. The Greek Organization Against Drugs (OKANA) together with the Hellenic Association for the Study of the Liver (HASL) initiated a nationwide project (“TITYOS”), aiming to microelimination in PWUD under OST. In this analysis we present the first data regarding screening, diagnosis and treatment of hepatitis C in Greek OST programmes until December 2023.

### Description of model of care

An analysis of prospectively collected data was conducted. The total sample consisted of 6,838 individuals who attended 66 OST units (buprenorphine/methadone: 77.2%/22.8%) throughout Greece (Athens Metropolitan area: 38%, Thessaloniki: 23%, other: 39%). The majority (86.8%) were male, with a mean age of 49±9.1 years.

### Effectiveness

6,457 out of 6,838 individuals (94.4%) have been tested at least once for anti-HCV. Positive anti-HCV was found in 4,362 out of 6,457 (67.6%) tested subjects. Testing for serum HCV-RNA was performed in 3,093/4,362 (70.9%) individuals. HCV-RNA testing performance rates were significantly higher in Athens (79.3%) compared to Thessaloniki (68.7%) and the rest of Greece (63.8%) ( $p<0.001$ ).

HCV-RNA was detected in 2,450/3,093 (79.2%) tested. Antiviral therapy was started in 2,100 out of 2,450 (85.7%) HCV RNA (+) patients. Sustained Virological Response (SVR) achieved in 1,093/1,137 (96.1%) of patients with currently available results.

### Conclusions

The target of HCV screening among PWUD under OST in Greece has been almost fulfilled. However, a significant gap still persists at the level of PCR testing. In the contrary, almost 90% of individuals who had been found viremic started antiviral therapy. SVR rates are inconcordance with those in general population. The TITYOS collaboration project should be intensify by stepping up efforts in order to reduce the gaps in HCV RNA testing.