

JUST A GP, JUST A FINGER PRICK, JUST AN HOUR

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Background/Approach

Over the month of November 2020, we conducted a screening blitz using GeneXpert HCV RNA point of care testing (PoCT) and Fibroscan on patients at high risk of HCV at a suburban GP clinic, Medeco Inala.

Analysis / Argument

Simplified, fast and accessible HCV testing is essential for breaking down barriers to HCV care. The GeneXpert HCV PoCT enables fingerstick testing to occur at a GP clinic with results available under 1 hour. Setting up HCV PoCT in GP clinics increases accessibility, further enabling treatment initiation and simplifying the cascade of care.

Outcome / Results

In November 2020, we used GeneXpert HCV PoCT in a GP practice to screen patients at high risk of HCV. We conducted 157 GeneXpert HCV tests over 4 weeks. With 13 HCV positive, 122 HCV negative, 15 tests errored and 6 tests invalid. Of the HCV positive results, 2 were currently on treatment, 5 newly diagnosed and 6 were re-infections. Of the 11 patients requiring treatment, 7 have commenced treatment. With negative results, 8 represented SVR12 results (not previously recorded) and 3 were SVR4 result. 83.1% of the cohort tested were currently on OST and 93.1% had a past or present history of injecting drugs. 19.2% of the cohort identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Conclusions / Applications

Incorporating HCV PoCT in GP clinics is a huge game changer in the diagnosis of HCV and efficient linkage to care. Locating the diagnostic tool inside the GP clinic improves screening rates and reduces lost to follow up. PoCT enabled patients that have limited venous access to get diagnosed (and start treatment) and also for patients obtain an SVR12 result. This model highlights the ability for HCV PoCT to occur at GP clinics and other primary care facilities throughout Australia. Thereby simplifying the journey to micro-elimination in these clinics.

Disclosure of interest statement

GeneXpert machines and cartridges were provided free of charge by Gilead Sciences Pty. Ltd. Via a pilot point-of-care testing program. Dr Young and Dr O'Loan have received honorariums from Gilead, Abbvie, Merck and Indivior