

Expanding Access to Healthcare: Introducing Hepatitis C Testing at Queensland Drug and Alcohol Court

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Background/Approach

Hepatitis Queensland (HQ) first began operating onsite hepatitis C (HCV) test and treat clinics at Community Corrections in August 2020. The clinic model is a one-stop-shop with a GP, Peer Worker, HCV point-of-care testing and a Community Nurse with FibroScan. HQ has expanded this clinic model to six locations within Brisbane.

In late 2024, HQ was approached to operate this clinic model onsite at Brisbane Magistrates Court (BMC) for Queensland Drug and Alcohol Court (QDAC) clients, as well as Court Link and Murri Court participants.

Analysis/Argument

Participants attending QDAC are individuals who report severe drug and/or alcohol use that is linked to their offending. As an alternative to imprisonment, they are sentenced to a treatment order and referred to QDAC to address their drug and alcohol dependence. Clients attending QDAC have a higher prevalence of prior injecting drug use, reinforcing the need for HCV testing to be available to them onsite.

Outcome/Results

Following extensive HCV education for the BMC workforce, HQ has delivered two onsite clinics at BMC for QDAC, Court Link and Murri Court participants. A total of 21 clients were screened for HCV, with four clients returning a positive HCV PCR result (19% prevalence).

Due to the positive response, further clinics are scheduled for 2025.

Conclusions/Applications

It is important that HCV testing is readily available in environments where there is a high number of people who report past/current injecting drug use. The HQ onsite testing model allows people to be screened and scripted for treatment within a single visit, minimizing the need for multiple appointments, ensuring clients are engaged in treatment quickly.

Disclosure of Interest Statement

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