

## Practical solutions for hepatitis C treatment uptake

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**Background:** Australia's progress towards achieving the World Health Organisation (WHO) elimination targets for hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection by 2030 is at risk. To overcome this challenge, it is essential to comprehensively understand the barriers to treatment uptake and develop practical solutions. We aimed to identify the motivations that will help individuals cross the threshold to pursue treatment and to uncover potential incentives that could make treatment more appealing.

**Methods:** Between November 2023 and January 2024, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 HCV-positive individuals with a history of injecting drug use, employing thematic and framework analysis.

**Results:** The study findings suggest that abstinence from substance or stable drug use, stable housing, and family and social support are significant motivators for HCV treatment. Additionally, financial incentives as well as broader assistance with navigating health systems including transportation assistance are potential incentives for hepatitis C treatment.

**Conclusion:** Improving HCV treatment uptake will require a holistic approach including 1) alternative treatment modality to traditional opioid agonist therapy, 2) messaging that promotes HCV treatment even during active drug use, 3) reassessment of healthcare priorities to address the needs of people who inject drugs, 4) incentivising HCV treatment through financial, housing support, assistance with service navigation, and 5) mental health support through social interventions.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:** None.