

WHEN HEP C CARE & TREATMENT MEETS NSP... ITS POSITIVELY HEP

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Background/Approach:

In NSW approximately 80,700 people are living with chronic hepatitis C (HCV). In March 2016 a direct acting antiviral (DAA) medication was listed on the PBS making HCV treatment safer, highly effective and easier to manage in people less likely to access mainstream health services.

Positively Hep is a multidisciplinary HCV project led by the Needle and Syringe Program (NSP), in partnership with Sexual Health (SH) and the Liver Clinic. The project is unique in providing the first NSP HCV treatment setting in NSW and is managed using a nurse led model of care.

Analysis/Argument:

The project offers a series of small incentive payments for participants to be educated, tested and assessed for treatment readiness. They are encouraged to share their knowledge amongst peer networks, therefore reducing the fear of treatment and building a network of peer support.

The project commenced in South Court (Nepean NSP) on the 9th March 2016. The program's 2 Nurses were upskilled in HCV assessment, screening, conducting and interpreting fibroscans. Review of results, and medication prescribing is the responsibility of the Staff Specialist in SH, a co-located service and long term partner of the NSP.

Outcome/Results:

At the time of writing; 300 participants have been educated about DAA treatment regimes, 137 have been screened, 32 have undergone a fibroscan examination.

Results have identified 61 cases of current HCV, with 20 commencing treatment and to date 18 have completed treatment

Conclusions/Applications:

The NSP provides a unique and trusted setting and offers a flexible approach to HCV treatment. The nurse-led model of care allows treatment to be delivered in a way that recognises the challenges of this client group. All interactions occur on a drop-in basis.

Variations of this project have been taken up in other LHDs, providing a blue print to deliver HCV treatment in a familiar and trusted setting.

Disclosure of Interest Statement

The SouthCourt Primary Care Centre and Needle and Syringe Program is fully funded by the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District. No pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this piece of work.