



Kirby Institute

Hepatitis C screening, diagnosis, and treatment scale-up among people who use drugs: micro-elimination in an Iranian city

Maryam Alavi, Poustchi H, Hariri S, Hajarizadeh B, Esmaeili A, Nejad-Ghaderi M, Jamalizadeh A, Shamsizadeh A, Talebi N, Saeidi Z, Abolhasani B, Merat S, Sohrabpour A, Grebely J, Dore GJ, Malekzadeh R



COI and acknowledgements

- No COI to disclose
- All people who have participated in this study & trusted us to share their stories and information
- Peer support workers, outreach workers, and care providers who have co-led this study



Background and methods

- This study evaluated the impact of a micro-elimination intervention on HCV diagnosis and treatment uptake among people who use drugs in Rafsanjan, Iran
- Observational study, evaluating an intervention to scale-up of DAA treatment to reduce HCV RNA prevalence (i.e. micro-elimination) in Rafsanjan, population 200,000
- Between October 2019 & September 2020, participants were recruited from one prison, 35 OAT clinics, 4 residential addiction treatment centers, and an integrated HCV/HIV clinic
- Intervention entailed on-site rapid HCV antibody testing, venepuncture sampling for HCV RNA testing (if antibody positive), and DAA dispensing for people with HCV
- The uptake of HCV diagnosis and treatment and HCV RNA prevalence were planned to be compared at baseline and 12 months post-intervention



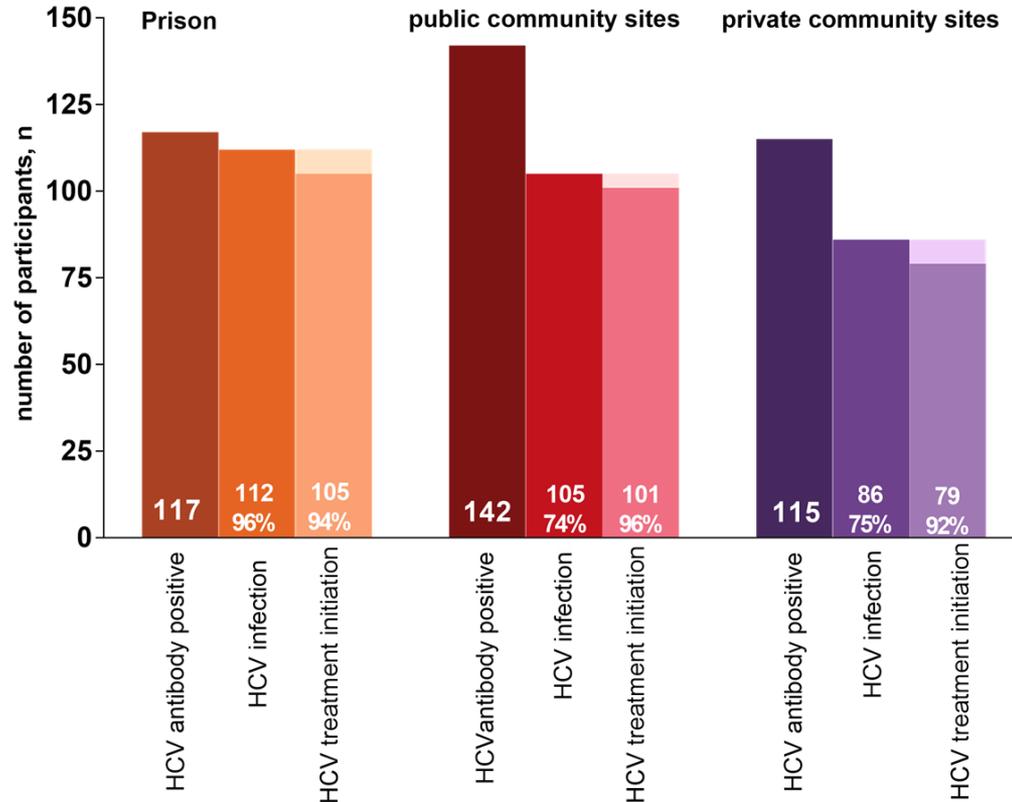
Findings: demographic characteristics & baseline HCV prevalence (Sep 2019 to Sep 2020, intervention period)

Characteristics, n(%)	Total n=4,564	Prison n=1,162	Public community sites n=524	Private community sites n=2,878
Age, median (IQR)	40 (33, 49)	36 (30, 42)	44 (38, 52)	41 (34, 50)
Male sex	4,329 (95)	1,142 (98)	422 (82)	2,765 (96)
Drug use, ever	4,098 (90)	767 (67)	454 (87)	2,878 (100)
Drug use, past year	1,896 (46)	640 (83)	92 (20)	1,164 (41)
Most frequently used	opium 918 (49)	heroin 261 (41)	opium 43 (47)	opium 708 (61)
Injecting drug use, ever	297 (7)	88 (11)	105 (23)	104 (4)
HCV Ab	374 (8)	117 (10)	142 (27)	115 (4)

Among people with a history of injecting drug use, HCV Ab prevalence was 66% (195 of 297)



Findings: HCV treatment uptake (Sep 2019 to Sep 2020, intervention period)



Conclusions & future directions

- Collaboration with local stakeholders, transfer of knowledge, and using the existing resources and structure are key in developing successful models of HCV care in Iran
- Major challenges remain to expand HCV diagnosis and treatment across Iran. Most importantly: limited government support, trade sanctions, and the pandemic



Other acknowledgements and contact details

- Site PIs and collaborators from Rafsanjan University of Medical Sciences and Tehran University of Medical Science who have contributed to this study
- email: msalehialavi@kirby.unsw.edu.au

