

MEANINGFUL PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HCV RESEARCH: A FOCUS ON PEER RESEARCHERS

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Why is this workshop needed:

HCV can have a significant impact on people who are often marginalised or disadvantaged and affected by stigma. Evidence suggests even with experienced field researchers, participants may not disclose sensitive aspects of their experience due to fear of judgment. This can be mitigated by the use of peer researchers. Peer research may also have additional benefits for the peer researchers, including increased confidence, reduction in social isolation and opportunities to progress to education, training and employment. Peer research is beneficial in reaching groups through peer networks that research projects traditionally struggle to engage, and contributes towards more meaningful patient and public involvement. Despite this, peer research is currently underused in HCV research.

Expected Outcomes:

Participants will:

- Learn about peer research, and debate strengths and weaknesses of this approach
- Gain an understanding of appropriate applications of peer research
- Consider ethical, cultural and scientific challenges of peer research methodology
- Have an opportunity for discussion with peer researchers

Learning Objectives:

- Gain an understanding of peer research and related concepts including community based participatory research and patient and public involvement
- Be able to articulate strengths and weaknesses of the peer research approach
- Understand when the approach may and may not be suitable
- Explore the potential for future research using this method

Description of the contents of the workshop:

The workshop will combine presentation and facilitated discussion. We will present learning from Scottish Drug Forum's peer research projects, including insights from a current peer researcher. Through participatory discussion we will explore with participants strengths and weaknesses of the approach and it's applicability to HCV research. Ethical, cultural and scientific considerations will be also explored and debated. The session will end with time for questions.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *No conflicts of interest*