

# UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO DAA THERAPY PAVES THE WAY FOR HCV CONTROL AND ELIMINATION AMONG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV IN AUSTRALIA

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## Introduction:

HCV elimination among people living with HIV may be possible in Australia, given population size (n=2000-3000), high proportion diagnosed and linked to care (>80%), and universal access to direct-acting antiviral (DAA) therapy. The aims of this analysis were to evaluate HCV treatment uptake, outcomes and HCV infection burden among people enrolled in the Control and Elimination of HCV from HIV-infected individuals within Australia (CEASE-D) cohort study following the availability of DAA therapy.

## Methods:

Adults with HIV and past (HCV Ab positive, HCV RNA negative) or current (HCV Ab positive, HCV RNA positive) HCV infection were eligible. Cumulative HCV treatment uptake was defined as the proportion of eligible individuals (diagnosed with HCV and did not demonstrate spontaneous clearance) who ever initiated HCV treatment (censored 16 October 2017). Annual HCV treatment uptake was defined as the proportion of eligible individuals who initiated treatment per year.

## Results:

Of 402 HIV/HCV Ab-positive individuals enrolled, 95% were male (80% gay and bisexual men), 13% had cirrhosis, and 36% reported current injecting drug use, predominantly (meth)amphetamine. Cumulative HCV treatment uptake among individuals ever diagnosed with HCV was 88% (95%CI 85%, 92%). Annual HCV treatment uptake increased from 7% (95%CI 4%, 10%) and 10% (95%CI 7%, 14%) in 2014 and 2015, respectively, to 76% (95%CI 71%, 81%) in 2016 (p for trend <0.001); SVR12 was 65%, 90% and 94% in 2014, 2015 and 2016, respectively. The extrapolated proportion with detectable HCV RNA decreased significantly between 2014 and 2018, from 83% (95%CI 78%, 86%) to 18% (95%CI 14%, 22%) (p for trend <0.001).

## Conclusion:

Universal access to DAA therapy has permitted rapid HCV treatment scale-up in 18 months. High DAA uptake and efficacy has significantly reduced the proportion with

detectable HCV RNA, paving the way for HCV control and elimination among people living with HIV in Australia.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The Kirby Institute is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the position of the Australian Government. The Burnet Institute receives funding from the Victorian Operational Infrastructure Support Program. Research reported in this publication was supported by Gilead Sciences Inc as an investigator-initiated study. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors. Gregory Dore, Margaret Hellard and Gail Matthews are supported by the National Health and Medical Research Council (GD: Practitioner Fellowship; MH: Principal Research Fellowship; GM: Career Development Fellowship).