PROGRESS TOWARDS ELIMINATION OF HEPATITIS C AMONG PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS IN NORWAY

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Background
The Norwegian government targets HCV elimination within 2023. In Norway, 80–90% of HCV infections occur among people who inject drugs (PWID). The aim of this study was to estimate changes in incidence and prevalence of chronic hepatitis C (CHC) among PWID 2015—2025.

Methods
Estimates were based on HCV notifications, HCV treatment prescriptions, HCV prevalence studies, and a population size of 22 000 lifetime PWID through the period. An all-cause mortality rate of 1.5/100 PY among PWID with CHC was assumed stable through the period. Relative treatment uptake 2021—2025 was assumed equivalent to 2020 (26% of CHC cases). Successful treatment rates (achieved SVR) were estimated as 80% in 2015, and 95% the following years. First-time incident cases of CHC were assumed to be 3% of CHC prevalent cases 1 January each year, and re-infections were estimated as decreasing fractions of successful treatments the last five years.

Results
The number of successful HCV treatments in 2015 were 540, in 2018: 2240, in 2020: 1038, and estimated in 2025: 274. First-time incident cases of CHC were estimated to be 276 in 2015, gradually decreasing to 32 in 2025. Re-infections in 2015 were 29, increasing to 52 in 2020, decreasing to 15 in 2025. Prevalent cases of CHC in 2015 was 9287, gradually decreasing to 824 in 2025. Prevalence of CHC is presented in Figure 1. The WHO target of 80% reduction of CHC incidence compared to 2015 was estimated to be accomplished in 2023; and with re-infections included, in 2024. In addition, an 80% reduction in CHC prevalence among PWID may also be accomplished in 2023.

Conclusion
We estimate that Norway is on track to elimination of HCV infection among PWID within 2023.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:
HM has received lecture and consultancy fees from Gilead, MSD, and AbbVie. OD has received support for research from MSD, Gilead, and AbbVie. JH is an industrial sector PhD-student in cooperation with AbbVie. No pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this study.

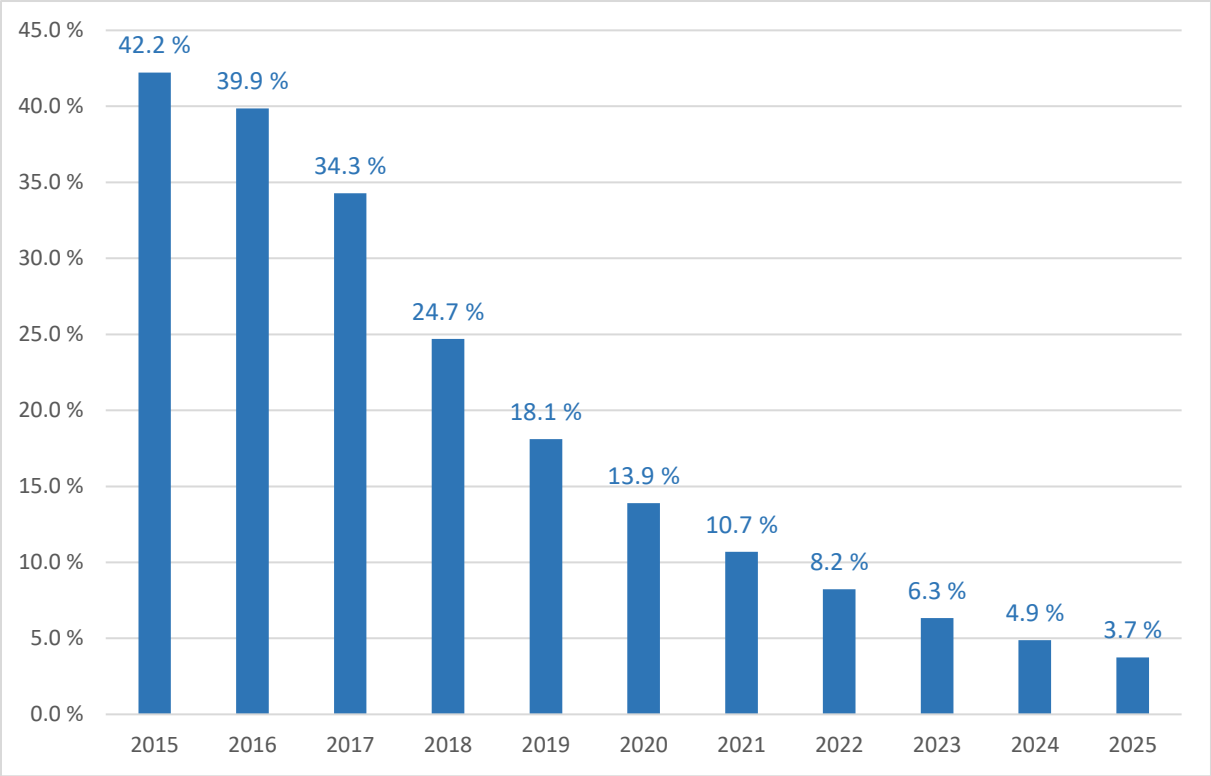

Figure 1 Estimated prevalence of chronic hepatitis C among lifetime PWID in Norway 2015—2025

Abbreviation: PWID, people who inject drugs