

# Hepatitis C Treatment in Provincial Jails: A Missed Opportunity

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## Background

In Ontario and Manitoba, Hepatitis C therapy is not funded for inmates in the provincial correctional system. The disparities among provincial prisons including funding eligibility impact the eradication HCV by 2030 unlikely<sup>1</sup>. The efficacy of seeing patients while incarcerated in order to link them to subsequent outpatient care is unknown.

## Methods

Two Infectious Diseases physicians and one Hepatitis C Nurse conducted consultations in a provincial jail in London, Ontario. Charts were reviewed for outcomes.

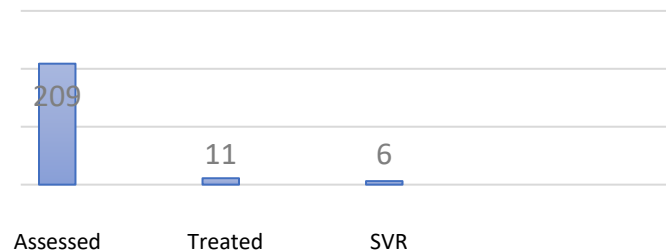
## Results

209 mono-infected Hepatitis C patients were assessed between January 2017-October 2021. 11 were treated while incarcerated via obtaining coverage as a purported outpatient, prior to this option being closed in March 2020. One patient with decompensated cirrhosis was released briefly to allow outpatient treatment before being re-incarcerated. One patient followed up for outpatient treatment and obtained sustained virologic response (SVR). In total, SVR was obtained in 6 out of 209 (2.9%) inmates assessed. Since the closure of the option to obtain outpatient HCV treatment coverage from the provincial plan while incarcerated, no further treatment has occurred.

## Conclusion

Consultation while being incarcerated does not generally lead to linkage to care post release. The policy of not covering Hepatitis C medications while incarcerated in a provincial institution needs to be reconsidered.

Figure 1. Inmate assessed, treated



## References

1 Kronfli N, Dussault C, Bartlett S, et al. Disparities in hepatitis C care across Canadian provincial prisons: Implications for hepatitis C micro-elimination. *Can Liver J.* 2021; 4(3):292-310 <https://doi.org/10.3138/canlivj-2020-0035>