

Enablers and barriers to hepatitis C treatment uptake

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“Not just one box”



Fig. 1. Hepatitis C Care Cascade [Reprinted from The International Journal of Drug Policy, Oct; 26(10), Grebely, J., Bruggmann P., Treloar C., Byrne J., Rhodes T., Dore GJ., et al. Expanding access to prevention, care and treatment for hepatitis C virus infection among people who inject drugs. 893–8. (2015), with permission from Elsevier.].

Case study (5 participants)

- 2 disengaged in care cascade after RNA diagnosis
- 2 ‘housed’ at post-treatment pillar
- 1 received treatment; dissenting case



ETHOS II

HCV RNA point-of-care testing at a reception prison

- Same-day RNA testing and results reduced systemic barriers to hepatitis C care in the prison setting

*I knew of my hep C nine years ago [...] they do all the blood tests again and then it's three or four weeks before they get a result back. In that meantime, **I've been moved again**, so then we ended up getting the results. Now it shows that yes I do have hep C. [...] and come back and said, "well **we can't start treatment, because we don't have the [genotype]**". [...] Now **this has been going on for the last six years** [...] but yeah, I'm glad this time when I come in, within the first week, the new testing, like with the new equipment, I don't think you could improve it much better than it is now, cause like, I got tested the first week I was in here. Mate, **within the hour** [...] you told me [...] **yes I did have hep C and not even a week later I started the medication.** (Brendan, IDU, Venepuncture)*

Enabler: Integrating care

OAT service integrated provision of DAAs alongside methadone

Like I'm hep C free ... the methadone and the counselling: all that combined.
(Rachel)

Enabler:

Supporting diverse approaches to treatment adherence

- Amelia's story

I guess, like, [taking my hepatitis C treatment] was **last on my list to do**, which probably **harmed my health**. [...] It's a 12-week medication and three quarters of it was taken in, like, dribs and drabs pretty much. So, like, **out of seven days of the week, I was lucky if I took it four times a week**.

Yeah, it was [difficult to manage treatment] and especially, like, you are **not really wanting certain people to know, because they will judge you** [...] Then you kind of [are] **hiding your medication** and then you're **not taking it anymore** and then you're **taking it whenever**.

My best friend, like, was trying to help me, so I moved into the place [house] that I'm in now, so my own place. She was just trying to help me get sorted and some sort of routine and whatever. So she's like, 'Amelia, **why don't you take the medication to the chemist?**' [...] '[You] **go to the chemist every day** [to get your methadone dose], **so while they are dosing you, they might as well dose you your [HCV medication]**, and then you are not forgetting'. And yeah, so that's what I did.

Barrier: Disruptions

I started treatment at [prison], I was on it for maybe a few weeks, **and then I got released,** and they gave me my treatment to take with me, and then **when I got out, I lost the treatment,** and **life proceeded.** [Yeah, yeah, okay. How much of your treatment did you complete?] Maybe a month. [Okay.] Yeah, so they gave me four boxes of pills to take with me. [...] [How much [treatment] had you done before you got ... just before you got this?] Maybe a month, so maybe four weeks. [So it was pretty quick after you got released that you stopped treatment?] Yeah. (Participant #7)

SHARP-p

- Transition to community and continuity of care
- Stability (e.g., stable accommodation)

Point-of-care operator interviews (Nat'l Program)

- Support to attend pharmacy
- Roadblock: Pharmacy

A gender lens

- Gender disparities in accessing hepatitis C and OAT services
- Women more vulnerable in discussing and accessing hepatitis C and drug use care needs
 - Gender-based violence
 - Family responsibilities
 - Fear of child removal
 - Stigma and discrimination
- Women have lower incarceration rates and shorter lengths of stay

Thank you

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