

EC UPDATE - OCTOBER 2019

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING WITH THE EC TEAM?

TESTING CAMPAIGN!

In July the EC Partnership supported a hepatitis C Testing Campaign around World Hepatitis Day at four EC sites: Cohealth Healthworks, Cohealth Innerspace, Access St Kilda, and Mediclinic Clayton.

The focus of the testing campaign was to reach people who aren't engaged in hep C testing or care. Financial incentives were offered to clients to promote testing and to encourage them to bring their friends along.



We tested 89 people as a direct result of the campaign, of which 20 were RNA positive - providing a test yield of 22.5%. Follow-up testing and an evaluation will be completed shortly.

Contact Kico, kico.chan@burnet.edu.au for more information.

EC EXPERIENCE COHORT

The EC Experience Cohort aims to better understand people's experiences of treatment and identify barriers and enablers to taking up DAAs.

As of October 2019, we have recruited 211 people into the study from three sites. Key demographics to date are:

- Mean age 44
- 69% male
- Education levels: primary/year 7-9 (37%), Year 10 or higher (63%)
- 26% lived in unstable housing
- 37% injected at least daily
- 19% incarcerated in previous 12 months

The team presented preliminary findings to the Health Promotion Working Group in September. Some key findings were:

- Only 38% of participants knew that hepatitis C increases risk of liver cancer
- 'Other priorities in life' was the most common barriers to testing and treatment
- At least 32% experienced stigma related to hepatitis C in the last year

Recruitment at a fourth site will begin mid-October.

Contact Kat, kathleen.ryan@burnet.edu.au for more information.

THE ELIMINATE HEPATITIS C PARTNERSHIP



EC Partnership

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EC SITES

The EC nursing team is currently working with seven sites to deliver tailored support to scale up hepatitis C care. Nurses are assisting with caseload assessment, implementation of nurse-led testing, provision of on-site phlebotomy, and developing enhanced pathways for follow-up and treatment uptake.

The sites currently being supported are:

- Access Health
- Ballarat Community Health
- Genesis Medical Centre
- Health Works Cohealth
- Innerspace Cohealth
- Lygon Court Medical Centre
- Medically Supervised Injecting Room

We have also wrapped up working with Mediclinic and presented a formal evaluation of the impact of EC support on the numbers of people tested and treated for hepatitis C at the clinic.

The EC nurses are also in discussion with Bolton Clarke's Homeless Persons Program to work alongside them and assess hepatitis C prevalence among their homeless program.

Finally, Chloe facilitated the ASHM course 'Hepatitis C for NSP Frontline Workers' in Preston on 10 October, with Stephen from HepVic and Ashley from Cohealth Innerspace.

The workshop was well attended by harm reduction workers, nurses, and project workers.

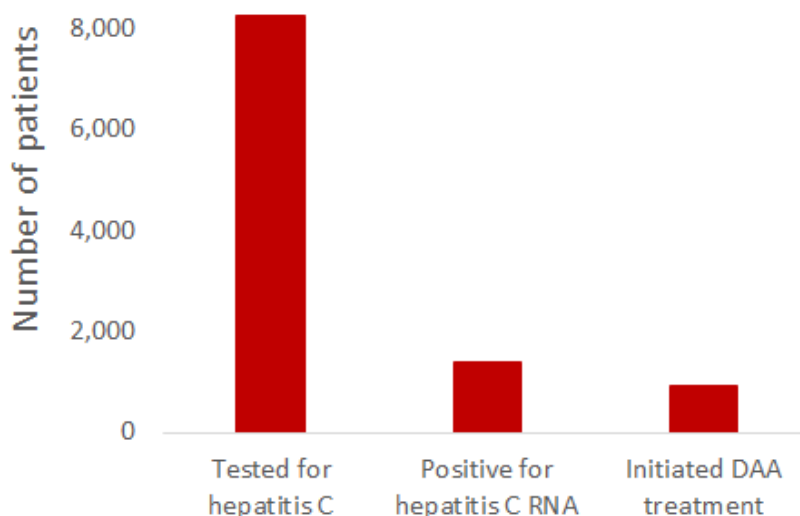
Contact Chloe, chloe.layton@burnet.edu.au for more information.

ACCESS REPORTING

The anonymous patient data extracted via ACCESS provides an assessment of hep C management at EC sites and other participating clinics across Victoria. ACCESS is now in place at 10 EC sites.

Site-specific reports have been generated for all EC clinics, and EC nurses and ACCESS staff will be presenting site reports to participating clinics in the coming weeks.

Between January 2017 to June 2019, ACCESS data shows:



Contact Michael, for more information michael.traeger@burnet.edu.au.

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EC HEALTH PROMOTION

The EC Health Promotion Working Group held its biannual meeting on 18 September 2019. It was great to have more than 20 people from a wide range of organisations interested in how to best promote and support PWID in Victoria to access hepatitis C care.

There were a large number of updates on organisational events, new resources and programs that have occurred since the last meeting in February, including:

An [educational comic book](#) about Hepatitis C published by The Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) program at North Richmond Community Health.

A [broadsheet presenting peer insights](#) from peer workers and other members of the people who inject drugs community on the access to and uptake of the new hepatitis C treatment.

The meeting also included updates on the PATH peer project, and the EC PWID mapping, which is being used to inform the development of the national health promotion campaign under EC Australia.

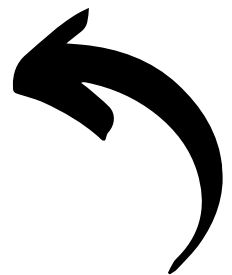
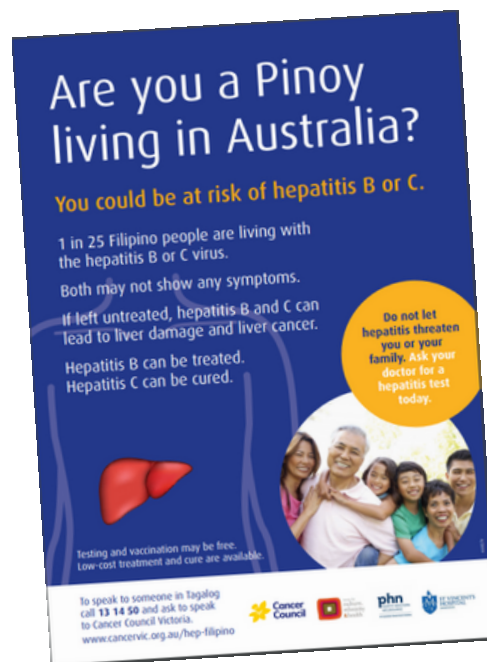
Contact Judy, judy.gold@burnet.edu.au for more information.

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

CANCER COUNCIL VICTORIA

Cancer Council Victoria, in partnership with the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health and St Vincent's Hospital, have created new materials to encourage people to get tested for hepatitis B and C and seek treatment and care.

The campaign is encouraging members of Victoria's Chinese, Thai and Filipino communities to get tested for hepatitis B and C to prevent liver cancer.



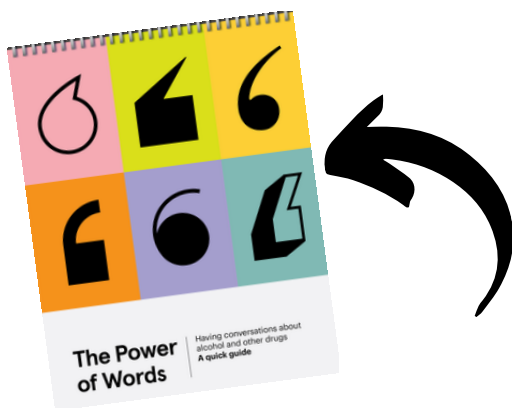
The posters can be downloaded and ordered from [here](#).

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Power of Words: a practical guide

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation, Association of Participating Service Users, Harm Reduction Victoria, Penington Institute and the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services have collaborated to develop an evidence-based suite of anti-stigma resources and guidelines, entitled [The Power of Words](#).



Integrated hepatitis C service reorientation project

The Australian Research Centre for Sex, Health and Society was engaged to undertake a two year reorientation of the IHCS program. The Integrated Hepatitis C Service Framework and Guidelines aim to provide a shared direction for all participating services to align with the priority actions articulated in the Victorian Hepatitis C Strategy 2016 -2020. Workplan pro formas will also be developed to assist each site to document and plan the project.

Contact

Elizabeth, Elizabeth.Birbilis@dhhs.vic.gov.au for more information

HARM REDUCTION VICTORIA

Harm Reduction Victoria have been busy working on evaluation and reflection tools for our new program – Peer Access to Treatment for Hepatitis (PATH). The project is a collaboration with EC and Access St Kilda, and aims to assess the effectiveness of peer-led engagement in increasing hepatitis C testing and treatment.

The project kicked off in the first week of October. Caro and Rob are the peer specialists whose days of operation will be Monday through to Friday.

The health promotion team are also working on an online anti-stigma module with the Department of Pharmacy at La Trobe University’s Bendigo campus, for use in Latrobe’s undergraduate pharmacy program.

Contact Hunter, hunterm@hrvic.org.au for more information

ST VINCENT'S PRISON PROGRAM

The program has had its funding continued for a further two years by Justice Health, The Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria.

We recently published [an assessment of the effectiveness of our nurse-led model](#), and we are planning to publish a cost-effectiveness model of the program

Contact SVHM.shp@svha.org.au for more information.

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

HEPATITIS VICTORIA

Let's talk about hep C!

A new anti-stigma video called 'Let's talk about hep C' has been developed. It addresses the importance of front-line healthcare workers being confident to discuss hepatitis C and to do this in a non-stigmatising way.



The video features both people with lived experience and healthcare workers familiar with hepatitis C.

FIT PACK STICKERS

Six designs have been enthusiastically received by 18 NSP services across the state, with 12,700 stickers distributed. Many services promoted the stickers on World Hepatitis Day. With the support of EC they will be re-printed due to high demand. An evaluation is currently underway.

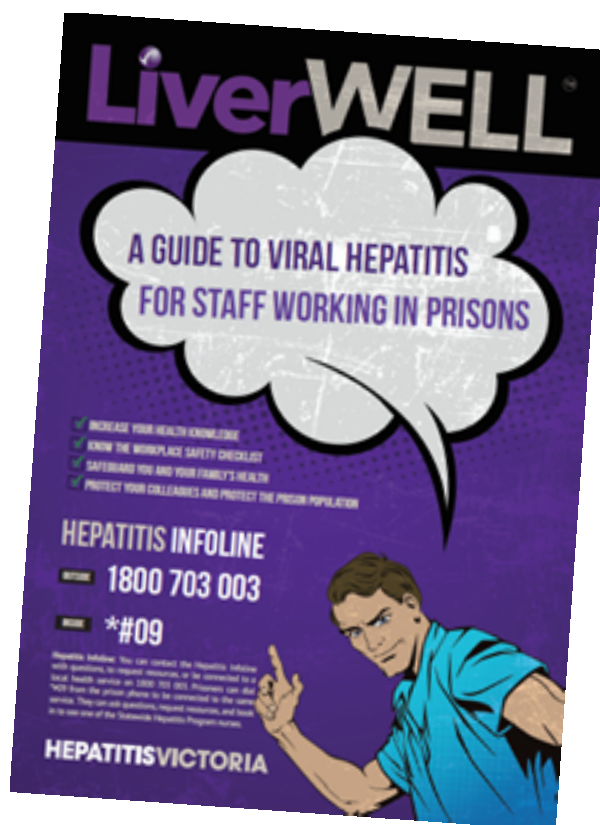


For more information, contact Isabelle isabelle@hepvic.org.au

PRISON STAFF SURVEY AND RESOURCES

A survey about viral hepatitis was completed by over 300 prison staff from all Victorian prisons in early 2019. Findings are currently being compiled into a report.

6000 Victorian prison-specific hepatitis booklets as well as 250 posters for staff common rooms will be distributed by Justice Health.



For more information, contact Neylan neylan@hepvic.org.au

NEW RESEARCH & OTHER UPDATES

NEW PUBLICATIONS

The [first national report](#) on progress towards the elimination of hepatitis C virus in Australia.

A [case study series](#) presenting eight diverse countries that have invested in responses to viral hepatitis and adopted innovative approaches to tackle their respective epidemics.

A [conceptualisation of peer-based programs](#) and the policy environments they engage with in the context of drug user organisations and hepatitis C elimination.

A [systematic review and meta-analysis](#) comparing hepatitis C reinfection outcomes among drug users and non-drug users.

The results from a [feasibility and acceptability study](#) of HCV point-of-care testing at needle and syringe exchange programs (NSPs) in Melbourne, Australia.

A [feasibility study](#) evaluating hepatitis C screening among people presenting to emergency departments.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

APSAD Scientific Alcohol and Drug Conference

The [APSAD conference](#) will be held on the 10-13th of November in Hobart. Fil from the EC team will be presenting initial findings around stigma as a barrier to hepatitis C care in health settings.

26th National Symposium on Hepatitis B and C: Saturday 23 November 2019

The [symposium](#) is for Gastroenterologists, ID physicians, GPs, nurses, scientists and community advocates and will be located at Australian Catholic University Fitzroy. It will provide lectures, panel discussions and interactive cases on viral hepatitis.

UPDATE ON PHARM EC

The PharmEC project is a randomised controlled trial that will compare point-of-care testing and treatment for hepatitis C by a nurse in pharmacies with standard provision of information only. The target group is people who are currently taking OST.

The trial is an international collaboration with researchers in Scotland and Wales. In Melbourne, seven pharmacies will be included in each arm and each will be recruiting 10 participants.

Enrollment of pharmacies is completed and it's likely that the first pharmacy will be recruiting participants by late October.

For more information contact Minh, minh.pham@burnet.edu.au.