

ADDRESSING THE HCV CASCADE OF CARE IN VULNERABLE POPULATIONS WITH POOR ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE IN MADRID THROUGH OF A POINT OF CARE IN A ONE STEP

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BACKGROUND:

Persons who inject drugs, homeless people, people with alcohol abuse and sex workers are vulnerable populations that have a high prevalence of active hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection. Novel testing modalities and approaches is essential to hurdle the gap of unidentified patients with active infection and to surveillance HCV reinfections.

DESCRIPTION OF MODEL OF CARE/INTERVENTION:

Active screening for HCV among vulnerable individuals is carried out in in settings where they congregate through diagnosis in a single step (HCV Xpert) since March 2019.

A van adapted for the project and a car sets out to actively search and HCV/HIV/HBV screening to identify those with active infection and is performed by a nurse and two educators hired specifically for this purpose.

Screening is carried out with a rapid test. All positive results are confirmed within minutes using an on-site PCR (Xpert® HCV Viral Load Fingerstick). For this test, 100µl of fingerstick capillary blood will be collected by minivette. and results will be returned within 58 minutes.

In the case of a positive HCV or HIV PCR test, the participant is offered the possibility of referral to hospital on the same day. HCV-infected patients who accept will be taken by car to the Hospital. The patient is able to take medication from the hospital pharmacy on the same day.

EFFECTIVENESS: This van started its activity in March 2019 and in a moth of activity it has screening 301 vulnerable individuals (40.5% drug users and 60% homeless and migrants). Of these 13.9% have a positive HCV antibody test and 36.5% of them have an active HCV infection (four reinfections included). All positive HCV PCR results were delivered and 86% of them were linked to Hospitals.

CONCLUSIONS: Our preliminary results provide evidence suggest that rapid point-of-care tests and a low-threshold population-based approach for the HCV allows for testing and linkage to care for difficult-to-reach populations.

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