Supporting primary care clinics to prioritise hepatitis C testing and treatment: the EC nursing model

EC Partnership

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Background

- Elimination of hepatitis C will require an increase in the number of people at risk of hepatitis, specifically people who inject drugs (PWID), being diagnosed and linked to treatment.
- The Eliminate Hepatitis C (EC) Partnership Victoria aims to increase the capacity of primary care clinics to provide hepatitis C testing and treatment to PWID in Victoria, Australia, through a nurse-led model of care.

Approach

- The EC nursing model uses a health system strengthening approach with support provided on a short-medium term basis.
- A Practice Support Toolkit (Figure 1) has been developed to support the whole of practice approach and targeting of interventions.
- The Australian Collaboration for Coordinated Enhanced Sentinel Surveillance (ACCESS) is used to evaluate the model, assessing changes in testing and treatment over time.

Figure 1: The Eliminate Hepatitis C Practice Support Toolkit

Results

- 11 high-caseload clinics were recruited between 2017 -2018 and support was provided on a short to medium basis as outlined in (figure 2)
- Each service is assessed to identify service specific issues and barriers that can then be targeted through a mix of interventions and support activities.
- Interventions and support included:
  - Education & mentoring
  - Addition of onsite pathology service
  - Clinical nursing support (detailed in Figure 3)
  - Implementation of proactive follow up system

Figure 2: Timeline of engagement with individual primary health care clinics

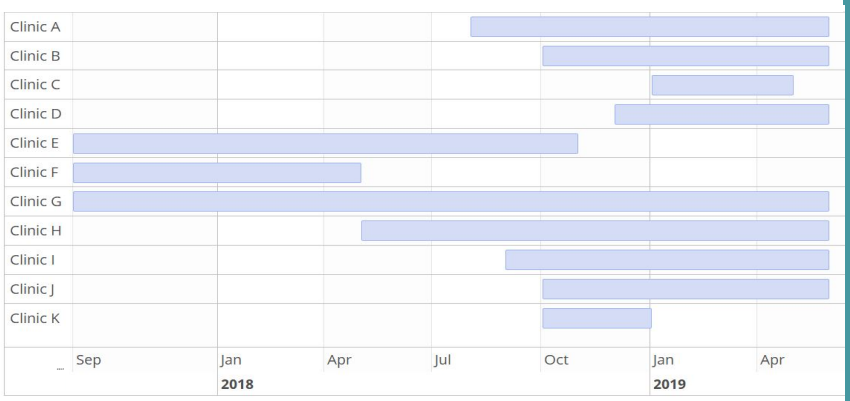
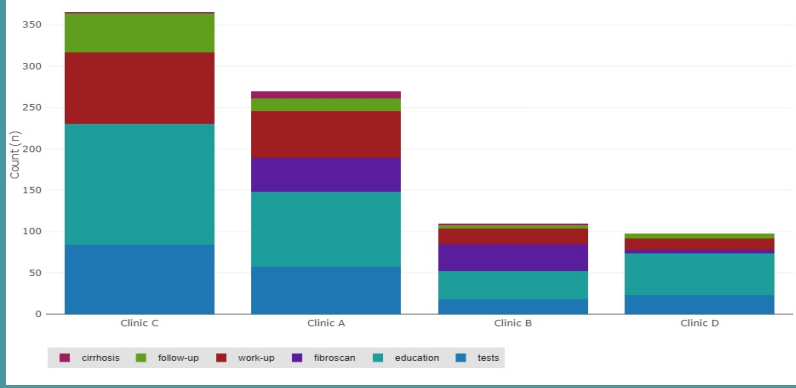


Figure 3: Type of interaction with patients at the clinics where clinical nursing support was offered



Conclusions

- Achieving elimination targets requires localised and coordinated responses.
- The EC nurse-led model uses a whole of service approach, which enables services to identify issues and barriers to providing care and then target interventions to improve the hepatitis C care cascade.

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