Regional HCV elimination plan in Veneto

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A test and treat HCV elimination strategy in
50 SerDs and 9 prisons

A region of ~5 million inhabitants

Regional HCV elimination plan in Veneto was approved in June 2018 – representing the first time in Italy that SerD and prison populations have been included in a regional plan for HCV elimination.

This strategy will help contain future healthcare costs by returning these populations to good health.

The integration of SerDs and penitentiary health centres into the Veneto regional health service will establish strong clinical networks.

Targeting these populations as a reservoir for HCV will contribute to the elimination of HCV in the general population.

Aim: to include 'special populations' – people who inject drugs (PWID) and prison inmates – in the Veneto regional HCV elimination plan thereby increasing HCV screening and linkage to care (LTC) within Veneto’s 50 SerDs and 9 prisons.

Why is a regional elimination plan including PWID and prisoners needed?

Ever seen up to 5300 HCV+ PWUD and prison inmates in the Veneto region?

PWID/PWUD: people who inject/use drugs; SerD: Servizi per le dipendenze – ‘Addiction Services’

Current and anticipated future outcomes

Phase 1 – Consultation 1

Rapid salivary antibody test (OraQuick®)

Disease counselling

Blood tests (APRI or FIB-4) & HCV RNA (viral load & genotype)

Pre-treatment counselling

Phase 2 – Consultation 2

Liver evaluation – mobile FibroScan®

Treatment start with direct-acting antivirals (DAAs)

Treatment & follow-up

Phase 3

Multidisciplinary team (per unit)

• SerD or prison nurse (case manager)

• SerD or prison doctor

• Infectious disease specialist/hepatologist

• Psychologist/counsellor

• Pharmacist

• Social worker

Interventions used to enhance HCV testing, LTC and treatment uptake

• Integrated onsite rapid HCV antibody testing (OraQuick® test), counselling and education in SerD or prison

• Nurse-led pre-treatment assessment in SerD or prison with specialist support

• Onsite non-invasive liver disease assessment using transient elastography (mobile FibroScan®)

What does the regional elimination plan involve?

The test and treat point of care strategy within the SerDs or prisons consists of a pre-ordered, essential sequence of actions used to diagnose and initiate treatment for HCV and help eliminate the referral barrier.

Priority target population

• High-risk SerD service users and prison inmates

• PWID

Multidisciplinary team

This test and treat point of care strategy may represent a good example of a model for HCV screening and treatment among PWID and prisoners that can be disseminated to other regions of Italy.


APRI: aspartate aminotransferase to platelet ratio index; PWID/PWUD: people who inject/use drugs; SerD: Servizi per le dipendenze – Addiction Services.

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