

March 2016

*HCV Action brings together hepatitis C health professionals from across the patient pathway with the pharmaceutical industry and patient representatives to share expertise and good practice.*

### News & reports...

\* The **World Hepatitis Alliance** are staging two free webinars, on 10<sup>th</sup> March and 4<sup>th</sup> April, aimed at equipping patients (and health professionals) with the tools to lobby for change in the way in which viral hepatitis is addressed at a policy level. Further details about the webinars can be found [here](#).

\* A recently released study has described an enhanced care pathway which could lead to a sustained increase in pathway engagement in people with hepatitis C. The study, which can be viewed [here](#), provides unequivocal evidence that care pathways for patients with hepatitis C in England can be improved.

\* New to the **HCV Action resource library** are the updated Scottish National Clinical Guidelines for the treatment of hepatitis C in adults. They provide guidance to Health Board Area Drug and Therapeutics Committees on the recommended use of hepatitis C drugs, and can be read [here](#).

\* A new study from Switzerland looks at how recent developments in hepatitis C therapy may impact upon mother to baby transmission, and recommends that universal screening for hepatitis C in pregnant women be urgently re-evaluated. It can be viewed [here](#).

\* 8,383 patients across the UK (but predominantly in Scotland) are being contacted and advised to take a

## Prison report and guidance published by The Hepatitis C Trust

The Hepatitis C Trust has published two documents which make for essential reading for anyone involved in the delivery of prison healthcare.



The first is a report which provides practical advice from prisons that are now offering blood borne virus (BBV) testing on an opt-out basis, and highlights several support needs within many prisons that require addressing. In particular, needs around clarity on the funding of testing and treatment pathways, further training, and details on what constitutes a good pathway, were identified. The report, which was produced after a series of interviews with prison healthcare managers, can be read [here](#).

The second publication - developed in consultation with an expert group convened by The Hepatitis C Trust - is guidance for prison healthcare staff and commissioners on how to develop improved hepatitis C care pathways in prison. The guidance is downloadable [here](#) as a word document, enabling prison healthcare teams and commissioners to use and adapt relevant segments according to their needs.

Jayne Dodd, Hepatitis Specialist Nurse for Prisons at the Pennine Acute Hospitals Trust and a member of the prisons healthcare expert group, **said** of the guidance:

*"Getting an effective hepatitis C service running in a prison takes time, commitment and investment, but the prison and surrounding community will reap the health benefits in the long term. If someone enters prison with hepatitis C and can be released hepatitis C-free, then that is a really positive health outcome for their time inside."*

*"I hope this guidance will help prison healthcare teams, substance misuse staff and prisons leadership to work closely with their local specialist secondary services to build good relationships and effective services. My message to you is simple: it can work and you will save lives."*

## New treatments reach 90 day milestone

As of 23<sup>rd</sup> February, a range of new treatments (including Harvoni, Daklinza, and Viekirax and Exvierax) are now available to large numbers of people with hepatitis C in England. The treatments were approved by the **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)** in November 2015, and with **NHS England**

hepatitis C test after a healthcare worker who worked primarily in Lanarkshire was found to have potentially infected two patients with hepatitis C. For more information on the story see [here](#).

\* **The Hepatitis C Trust** are this year establishing patient councils in each **Operational Delivery Network** (ODN) area, in order to ensure that every ODN has a strong patient voice. For further information on the councils, including how you or your patients/clients can become involved, see [here](#).

\* The **Hepatitis B and C Public Policy Association**, supported by patient and clinician groups from across Europe, have launched the '**Hepatitis C Elimination Manifesto**', which includes pledges to make the elimination of hepatitis C in Europe an explicit public health priority, and to create a European Hepatitis Awareness Week. The full text of the manifesto can be found [here](#).

#### Share your good practice...

*If you would like your service to be featured as a good practice case study on the HCV Action website, please send an email to [hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk](mailto:hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk).*

We want to keep HCV Action's membership updated on news and events from across the country.

**If you have any news you would like to share with colleagues or would like to publicise an event** please email details to [hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk](mailto:hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk).

required to make them available following 90 days of this approval, eligible patients should now have access to them.



However, in a recent survey of clinicians it was found that 75% felt they would not be free to prescribe these treatments to all eligible patients due to local restrictions. This is despite the fact that 72% believe that the eradication of hepatitis C could be possible within the next 20 years as a result of the advances in new treatment.

In response to the 90 day milestone being reached, Professor Geoffrey Dusheiko, Emeritus Professor of Medicine at the **UCL**

Institute of Liver and Digestive Health, said:

*"The NICE guidelines are an indisputable landmark, and signal that these medicines are integral to our fight to control the disease over coming decades. Our focus now must be to ensure that equitable care is offered to individuals with hepatitis C, without undue delay, wherever in England they reside."*

## Gilead Viral Hepatitis Fellowship Programme open for entries

The Gilead UK and Ireland Fellowship Programme 2016 for Viral Hepatitis, which aims to support local innovation and best practice in patient care, is now open for entries.

The programme is open to applications from healthcare or allied professionals who are seeking funding for a project in Viral Hepatitis that relates to community-based hepatitis C specialist treatment service models, or the



integration of hepatitis C testing into routine healthcare delivery. This includes individual organisations or groups of healthcare providers

within a locality, such as (but not limited to) hospital trusts, charities involved in public health or health provision, Clinical Commissioning Groups, health boards, and health officers responsible for providing, planning or commissioning clinical services.

To view the detailed criteria for entry and to find out how to apply, see [here](#). The deadline for entries is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

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