

October 2015

*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...

\* A new study, presented by [Dr Lucy Platt](#) of the [London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine](#) at a conference in Kuala Lumpur this month, shows that opioid substitution therapy (OST), especially in combination with needle exchange, reduces the transmission of hepatitis C. The study showed that individuals receiving OST had a 39% lower risk of acquiring hepatitis C compared to people who inject drugs who are not receiving OST. Read more on the study [here](#).

\* A poster is now available to view from the [HCV Action](#) website which details the work of [Frimley Park Hospital NHS Foundation Trust](#) in delivering community-based hepatitis C testing to the South Asian and Nepali communities. It highlights the successes that can be achieved through sustained community engagement and peer mentor support. To view the poster, click [here](#).

\* In 2014, [Addaction](#) and [The Hepatitis C Trust](#) partnered to form a pilot in the South West of England to encourage and widen access to hepatitis C treatment among people who inject drugs. One year on, an update has been published on the work carried out in North Somerset, which can be read [here](#), that presents early results from the pilot and sets out next steps in its delivery.

\* [Public Health Wales](#) has this month published the *Annual Profile of Substance Misuse in Wales for*

## NICE announces recommendations on new hepatitis C drugs

This October, the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\)](#) published its guidance on the use of three new hepatitis C treatments; ledipasvir-sofosbuvir (Harvoni), ombitasvir-paritaprevir-ritonavir (Viekirax) with or without dasabuvir (Exviera), and daclatasvir (Daklinza).



The guidance, which was published following preliminary recommendations in July, means that all genotype 1 and genotype 4 patients should now be able to access the new interferon-free treatments, which promise shorter treatment regimes and significantly less severe side-effects. Some genotype 3 patients should also be able to access Daklinza.

In response to the guidance, Charles Gore (Chief Executive of [The Hepatitis C Trust](#)) said: "People living with hepatitis C have been eagerly awaiting these new interferon-free treatments and it is now vital that NHS England ensures patients have access to them as quickly and widely as possible. These drugs are cost-effective and allow patients to be cured in as little as 12 weeks, so there really is no excuse for delaying treatment and continuing to allow ever-increasing numbers of hepatitis C patients to progress to end-stage liver disease and liver cancer."

## HCV Action and PHE roadshow update

HCV Action and [Public Health England \(PHE\)](#) staged their third hepatitis C good practice roadshow in Birmingham on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, following previous events this year in [Liverpool](#) and [London](#).

The Birmingham roadshow, which attracted a range of health professionals, drug workers, commissioners and other key-decision makers, focused on issues affecting hepatitis C services and strategy in Birmingham and the Midlands. Speakers included Dr Andrew Holt (Consultant Hepatologist at [Queen Elizabeth Hospital](#)), Catherine O'Connell (Regional Director for Specialised Commissioning, [NHS England](#)), and Dr Meng



2014-15. The report, which can be read [here](#), finds that of the anonymous samples taken from people who inject drugs in Wales, around 50% were infected with hepatitis C. It also found that 22% of people who inject drugs in Wales had engaged in the direct or indirect sharing of needles.

\* The Scottish National Hepatitis Patients Forum is being held on Thursday 5th November in Glasgow. If you know of a patient who would like to become involved in the forum, contact Petra Wright, Scottish Officer at [The Hepatitis C Trust](#), on [petra.wright@hepctrust.org.uk](mailto:petra.wright@hepctrust.org.uk).

#### Share your good practice...

Please share your good practice by filling in the quick online form [here](#).

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).

Khaw (East Midlands Centre Director, [PHE](#)). A summary report of the day will be published shortly.

The next roadshow will be staged in Brighton on 24<sup>th</sup> November, with speakers including [Prof. William Rosenberg](#) (Consultant Hepatologist, [Royal Free Hospital](#)), [Dr Stuart Flanagan](#) (Clinical Research Fellow, [Queen Mary University of London](#)), and [Dr Sumita Verma](#) (Honorary Consultant Hepatologist, [Brighton and Sussex University Hospital](#)). Taking place during European HIV/Hepatitis C testing week, the event will include a focus on HIV as well as hepatitis C, looking at how HIV and hepatitis C can be addressed together. To read more about the event and to book your free place, see [here](#).

## In focus: The Hepatitis C Trust helpline



The Hepatitis C Trust's national helpline, which is staffed solely by people who have or have had hepatitis C, acts as a vital resource for patients (and families of patients) who are seeking advice, support and information on the virus.

The confidential service, which has taken almost 40,000 calls since its launch in 2004, is also open to professionals who may need information about hepatitis C for their patients or clients, or who wish to simply learn more about the virus and how it may affect those with whom they work.

*Samantha May, Head of Support Services at [The Hepatitis C Trust](#) says: "We are always happy to receive calls from doctors, nurses, drug workers or anyone else who works with people who either have or are at-risk from hepatitis C. Our helpline team not only have lived experience of hepatitis C, but are also incredibly experienced in educating others about the virus. We are also able to provide benefits advice and patient advocacy to any patients who are referred to us."*

The helpline is open Monday to Friday from 10.30am-4.30pm. To speak to a member of the helpline team, call 0845 223 4424 or 020 7089 6221 or email [helpline@hepctrust.org.uk](mailto:helpline@hepctrust.org.uk). [The Hepatitis C Trust](#) also provide a separate Freephone service as a useful resource for prisoners seeking to find out more about hepatitis C. To access this service, call 0800 999 2052.

*HCV Action is co-funded by AbbVie, BMS, Gilead, Janssen and MSD.  
The Hepatitis C Trust provides secretariat support to HCV Action*

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**If you do not wish to receive this update in future please send an email [hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk](mailto:hcvaction@hepctrust.org.uk) asking to unsubscribe**

