



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Laboratory reports of hepatitis C in England and Wales: January to March 2020

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Between January and March 2020, a total of 3,771 laboratory reports of hepatitis C (HCV) were reported to PHE. There was a 15.4% decrease in the number of reports compared to the first quarter of 2019 (n=4456). This decrease is very likely due to the overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health services, including diagnostic testing for HCV.

Since 2017, one laboratory in the North West of England has undertaken HCV dried blood spot testing alongside hepatitis C routine laboratory testing. This single laboratory has taken on testing for a large part of the country however, some samples where geographical information is lacking, maybe incorrectly assigned to this specific laboratory rather than the laboratory from which the sample originated.

Age and sex were well reported (> 95.6% complete). Where known males accounted for 71.9% (2,591/3,605) of reports which is consistent with previous quarters and years [1]. Adults aged 25 to 44 years accounted for 52% of the total number of hepatitis C reports.

Table 1. Laboratory reports of hepatitis C in England and Wales, January to March 2020

Age group	Females	Males	Unknown	Total
1 to 4 years	0	1	0	1
5 to 9 years	2	1	0	3
10 to 14 years	1	1	0	2
15 to 24 years	63	30	2	95
25 to 34 years	461	219	28	708
35 to 44 years	878	315	60	1,253
45 to 54 years	689	221	46	956
55 to 64 years	347	145	7	499
≥ 65 years	128	76	2	206
Unknown	22	5	21	48
Total	2,591	1,014	166	3,771

Notes:

Individuals aged less than one year are excluded since positive tests in this age group may reflect the presence of passively-acquired maternal antibody rather than true infection.

Laboratory reports are not reliable for differentiating acute and chronic hepatitis C infections. Laboratory reports include individuals with a positive test for hepatitis C antibody, antigen and/or detection of hepatitis C RNA

A small proportion of these specimens are diagnosed following dried blood spot (DBS) testing. However, not all DBS testing is reported by laboratories.

Laboratory reports are presented broken down by Operational Delivery Network (ODN). ODNs were launched in April 2013 following the publication of the NHS England strategy to sustain and develop clinical networks.

ODNs are the networks through which hepatitis C treatment is being delivered across England. Between January and March 2020, 3,526 out of 3,713 individuals in England have been allocated to an ODN.

Table 2: Laboratory reports of hepatitis C by Operational Delivery Network, January to March 2020

Primary ODN	Total
Barts	180
Birmingham	326
Bristol and Severn	152
Cheshire and Merseyside	151
Eastern Hepatitis Network	257
Greater Manchester and Eastern Cheshire	178
Humberside and North Yorkshire	166
Kent Network via Kings	53
Lancashire and South Cumbria	138
Leicester	135
North Central London	282
North East and Cumbria	264
Nottingham	147
South Thames Hepatitis Network	245
South West Peninsula	42
South Yorkshire	149
Surrey Hepatitis Services	67
Sussex Hepatology Network	146
Thames Valley Hep C ODN	60
Wessex Hep C ODN	62
West London	159
West Yorkshire	167

Notes:

ODNs are based on NHS England Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) geographic boundaries. NHS England allocates a primary or lead ODN for CCGs which may cross 2 ODNs.

Lancashire and South Cumbria, South West Peninsula and Thames Valley Hepatitis C Network were ODNs which, between them, had 33 individuals that could also be assigned to a second ODN.

References

1. PHE (2018). Laboratory reports of hepatitis C in England and Wales, January to March 2018. *HPR* 13(27).
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/822683/hpr2719_HCV-ann18.pdf

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