TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AN OPPORTUNISTIC OUTREACH FIBROSCANNING SERVICE TO A COMMUNITY BASED DRUG TREATMENT CLINIC AND GENERAL PRACTICE IN DUBLIN

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Background: Injecting drug use (IDU) is a major driver of the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) epidemic. The Thompson Centre (HSE Addiction Clinic, Dublin) treats 228 patients with opiate dependence and a prevalence of HCV (Ab Positive) infection of 63.6% (n=145). This study aimed to establish a new service, supporting primary care drug treatment centres in screening and clinical evaluation of HCV, to facilitate HCV treatment in the community.

Aim: To evaluate the effectiveness of an opportunistic fibroscanning service to a community based drug treatment clinic in Dublin.

Methods: This screening programme provided on-site Transient Elastography (TE) testing, identifying those with advanced liver disease that qualify, based on a score >12kpa for HCV monoinfected and >10kpa for HCV/HIV co-infected, for interferon-free treatments. Our study included nurse liaison to optimise interaction with primary care. An audit of healthcare records identified reasons patients did not follow up.

Patient barriers to attending specialist service included: active drug use, fear of biopsy, and fear of interferon treatment.

Conclusion: Community fibroscanning provides an opportunity to identify those at highest risk of advanced liver disease. A community based shared care partnership with treatment being administered in the community would ensure that this cohort of vulnerable patients will have access to these new HCV DAA treatments.

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