

# World-first study shows the benefits of treating hepatitis C in primary care

Providing hepatitis C treatment in the primary care setting increases both treatment uptake and cure: the Prime Study

## THE ISSUE

Hepatitis C treatment is rarely available in primary care. Australia and New Zealand are among the few countries that permit prescription of hepatitis C treatment in this setting.

Increasing treatment uptake is a key component of hepatitis C elimination. To examine the effect of providing hepatitis C treatment in primary care, Dr Wade and colleagues conducted a trial comparing treatment uptake and cure outcomes in primary care with outcomes in standard hospital-based specialist care.

## WHAT OUR WORK FOUND

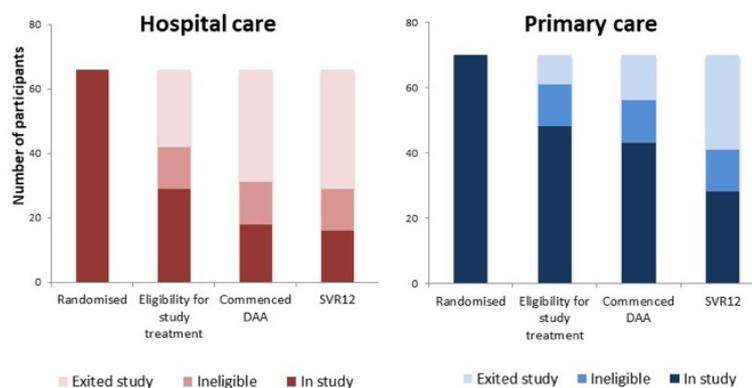
The Prime Study is the first randomised trial to compare direct-acting antiviral (DAA) treatment uptake in primary care with treatment in hospital-based specialist care. Between November 2015 and December 2017, 136 people with hepatitis C in Australia and New Zealand were randomly allocated to receive DAA treatment at their local primary care centre (70 patients) or hospital-based specialist clinic (66 patients). Most participants had a history of recent injecting drug use.

Key findings include:

- ▶ The proportion of participants who started treatment in primary care was significantly higher than in the hospital-based specialist clinic (75% versus 34%).
- ▶ The proportion of participants cured of their hepatitis C was significantly higher in participants treated in primary care than in the hospital-based specialist clinic (49% versus 30%).

## CONCLUSION

Providing DAA treatment in primary care increases treatment uptake and cure amongst people with hepatitis C.



These cascade of care graphs show the number of participants who reached key study milestones in each arm (hospital-based specialist care and primary care).

Graph reproduced from *Clinical Infectious Diseases* journal, Oxford University Press

## Policy Implications

- ▶ The Prime Study shows that providing hepatitis C treatment in primary care is highly effective, and is informing global and country-specific guidelines across the world.
- ▶ Support such as education and adequate resources must be provided to primary care providers to encourage active testing and treatment of hepatitis C.
- ▶ Approaches that increase treatment uptake amongst priority populations, such as people who inject drugs, will accelerate progress towards hepatitis C elimination.

For complete details and results, contact Dr Amanda Wade ([amanda.wade@burnet.edu.au](mailto:amanda.wade@burnet.edu.au))

Full publication: Wade A, Doyle J, Gane W, Stedman C, Draper B, Iser D, Roberts S, Kemp W, Petrie D, Scott N, Higgs P, Agius P, Roney J, Stothers L, Thompson A, Hellard M. Outcomes of treatment for hepatitis C in primary care compared to hospital-based care: a randomised, controlled trial in people who inject drugs. *Clinical Infectious Diseases* 2019. doi: 10.1093/cid/ciz546.