



Targeted versus routine opt out hepatitis C testing in the Philadelphia jail system

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BACKGROUND

Hepatitis C (HCV) infection disproportionately affects those in United States’ correctional institutions with seroprevalence rates from 17.4-23.1%. Jails have represented a particularly challenging setting for HCV testing and treatment given the short duration of stay and uncertainty of the timing of prisoners’ release. Despite recommendations that all incarcerated persons undergo HCV testing, screening is not universally performed.

METHODS

Between 4.1.2018 and 9.2.2019 prisoners in Philadelphia jails were only eligible to be screened for HCV at the time of sentencing or by order of prison medical staff. On 3 September 2019 the jail partnered with Philadelphia FIGHT Community Health Centers to implement routine opt out HCV testing for all persons upon intake. Herein, we report the differences in prevalence and demographics between targeted and opt out HCV testing models. Comparisons between the two periods are made using t tests.

RESULTS

FIGURE 1. Demographics

Demographics of all HCV tested PDP patients						Demographics of antibody positive PDP patients					
		Period 1 (n=2838)	Period 1 %	Period 2 (n=10991)	Period 2 %			Period 1 (n=1049)	Period 1 %	Period 2 (n=1437)	Period 2 %
Age	Baby Boomer	313	11.03%	790	7.19%	Age	Baby Boomer	171	16.30%	221	15.38%
	non- Baby Boomer	2525	88.97%	10201	92.81%		non- Baby Boomer	878	83.70%	1216	84.62%
Race	Asian	15	0.53%	74	0.67%	Race	Asian	2	0.02%	7	0.04%
	Black	1489	52.47%	7230	65.78%		Black	259	21.83%	370	25.75%
	Hispanic	694	24.45%	1814	16.50%		Hispanic	315	30.03%	278	19.35%
	White	624	21.99%	1730	15.74%		White	470	44.80%	764	53.17%
	Other	17	0.06%	88	0.80%		Other	3	0.03%	12	0.08%
	Unknown	0	0%	55	0.50%		Unknown	0	0%	6	0.04%
Gender	Male	2150	75.76%	9484	86.29%	Gender	Male	777	74.07%	1097	76.34%
	Female	688	24.24%	1491	13.17%		Female	272	25.93%	338	23.52%
	Unknown	0	0%	0	0%		Unknown	0	0%	2	0.01%

FIGURE 2. Comparisons between Period 1 (4/1/2018 to 9/2/2019) and Period 2 (9/3/2019 to 5/31/2020).

	targeted HCV testing at time of sentencing Period 1	opt-out HCV testing upon intake Period 2	(using chi-square comparison of proportions) sig. level
# individuals eligible for testing	4619	11962	
# individuals tested	2838 (61.46%)	10991 (91.88%)	P < 0.0001
# individuals ab+	1049 (36.98%)	1437 (13.17%)	P < 0.0001
# individuals RNA+	634 (60.38%)	966 (67.19%)	P < 0.0001
# RNA individuals staged via Fibrosure	309 (48.74%)	615 (63.66%)	P < 0.0001

CONCLUSIONS

The results of routine opt out HCV screening at time of intake in a large urban jail setting are more representative of the prevalence of HCV infection in a jail population than a targeted screening approach (13.7% vs. 37%). The opt out approach presents additional opportunities for disease staging and treatment initiation in a jail setting.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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