



# Liver disease knowledge and acceptability of non-invasive liver fibrosis assessment among people who inject drugs in the drug and alcohol setting: The LiveRLife Study

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# Project Collaborators

The Kirby Institute    
University of New South Wales

National Centre in HIV Social Research  
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Centre for Health Initiatives  
University of Wollongong 


NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA)



Hepatitis NSW 

Hunter Pharmacotherapy Services



St. Vincent's Hospital 

Australian Injecting &  
Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)



# Background

## PWID

- Lack of knowledge = barrier to seeking HCV assessment & Tx
- Higher knowledge = greater likelihood of receiving assessment & Tx
- Liver biopsy = barrier to assessment & Tx
- High willingness to receive Tx **BUT TX UPTAKE IS ~1-2% PER YR**

# Aims

To assess...

- Factors associated with baseline knowledge of HCV and liver disease
- Acceptability of transient elastography (TE) assessment (FibroScan<sup>®</sup>)
- Willingness and intent to receive HCV treatment

# Methods

## Study Design

Liver health promotion campaign designed to enhance liver disease assessments via FibroScan® in the drug and alcohol setting among persons with a history of injection drug use

LiveRLife Campaign



- Phase I: resource development
- Phase II: resource testing
- Phase III: implementation (2014)

# Resource Development & Testing

## Campaign Messaging

- Focus on liver health
- Main message: Get Tested
- Free, quick, painless
- Real success stories
- Non-technical language
- Positive tone
- Colourful



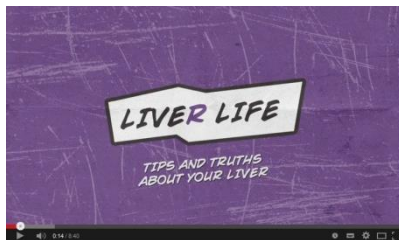
# Methods

## LiveRLife Resources

### PRINTED RESOURCE



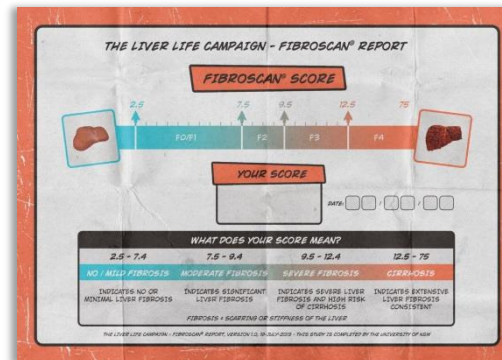
### SHORT FILM



### CAMPAIGN POSTERS



### FIBROSCAN REPORT



### STUDY WEBSITE

LIVERLIFE.ORG.AU





# Methods

## Study Population

- Prospective cohort design
- Aged  $\geq 18$  years, history of IDU
- No liver biopsy or FS in prior two years
- No current or previous HCV Tx
- Cannot be pregnant

### Recruitment from:

- Kirketon Road Centre
- Sydney Medically Supervised Injecting Centre
- Newcastle Pharmacotherapy Service (OST)
- Coffs Harbour Drug and Alcohol Services (OST)



# Campaign Day

## Post-Assessment Survey

FibroScan acceptability (Likert Scale)



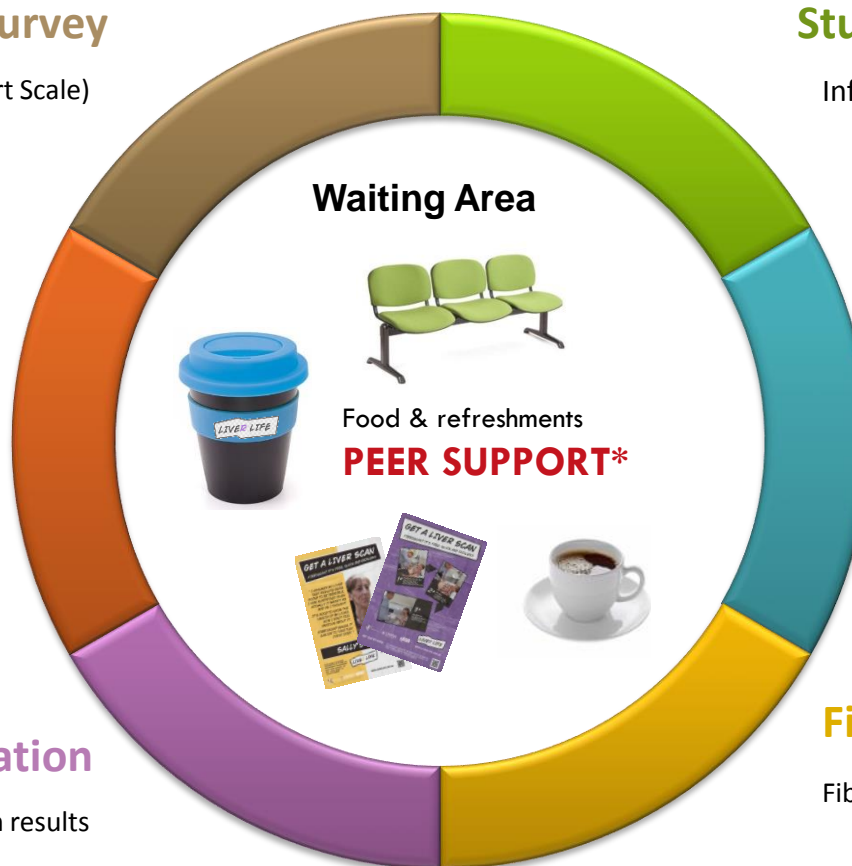
## Dried Blood Spot

HCV RNA testing



## Nurse Consultation

Review FibroScan results



## Study Enrolment

Informed consent

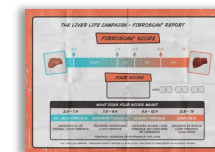
## Pre-Assessment Survey



Demographics  
Injecting history, behaviour  
Alcohol use (AUDIT-C)  
Baseline HCV & liver knowledge  
FibroScan willingness  
Tx willingness & intent (Likert scale)

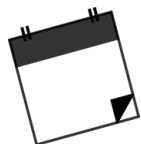
## FibroScan

FibroScan Score



## Participants (n=253)

31% injected  $\geq$ daily, past mon.  
30% heroin, last drug injected



**43**

Average age



**68%**

Male



**23%**

ATSI



**75%**

HCV+



**86%**

Govern't  
assistance



**27%**

Completed high  
school or higher  
education



**29%**

Unstable  
housing



**66%**

Ever been in prison

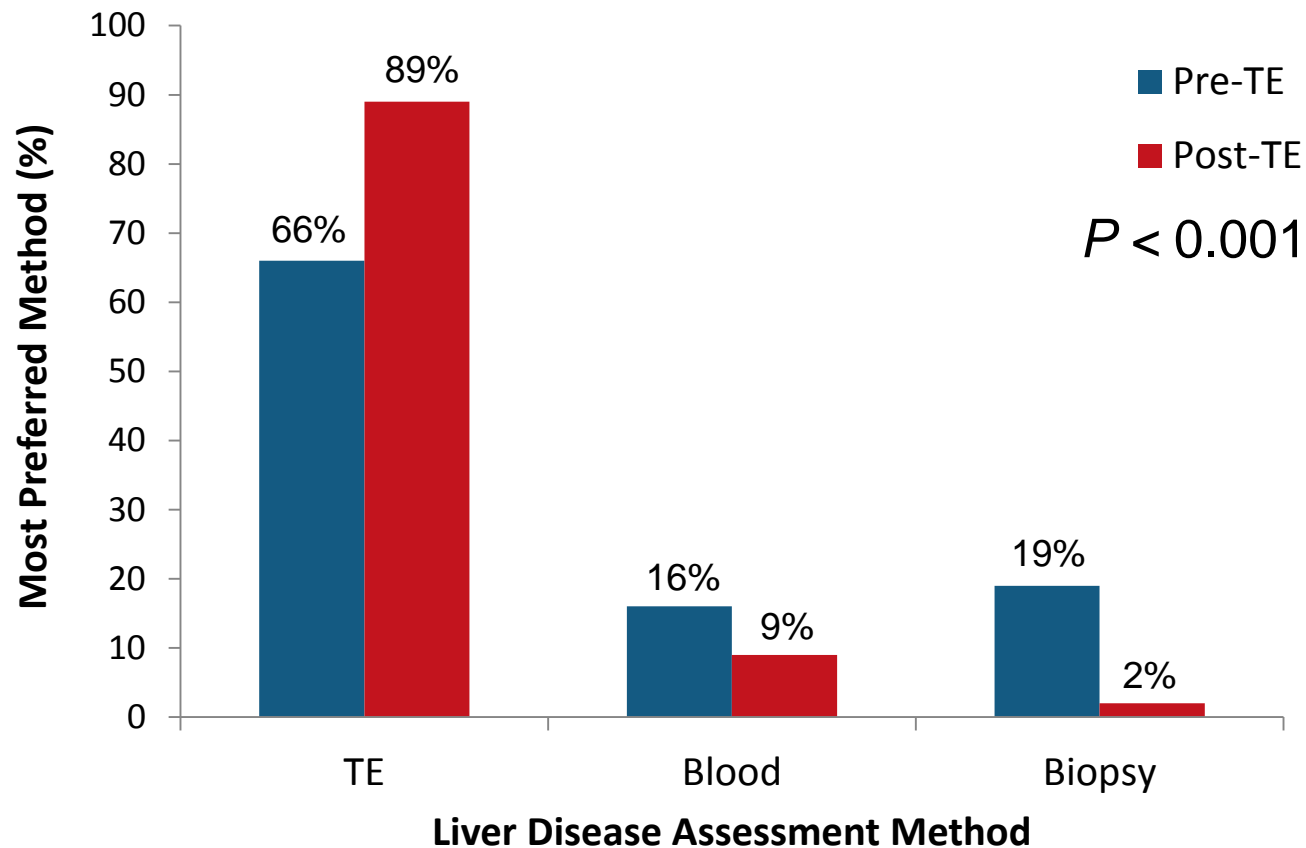
**22%** past 12 mons

# Results

- Median knowledge score 16/23 (70%)
- Less than daily injection (AOR 5.01; 95% CI, 2.64-9.51) and no daily injection in the past month (AOR 3.54; 95% CI, 1.80-6.94) were associated with high knowledge ( $\geq 16$ )
- 88% definitely or somewhat willing to receive HCV Tx
- 56% intended to start Tx in the next 12 mons

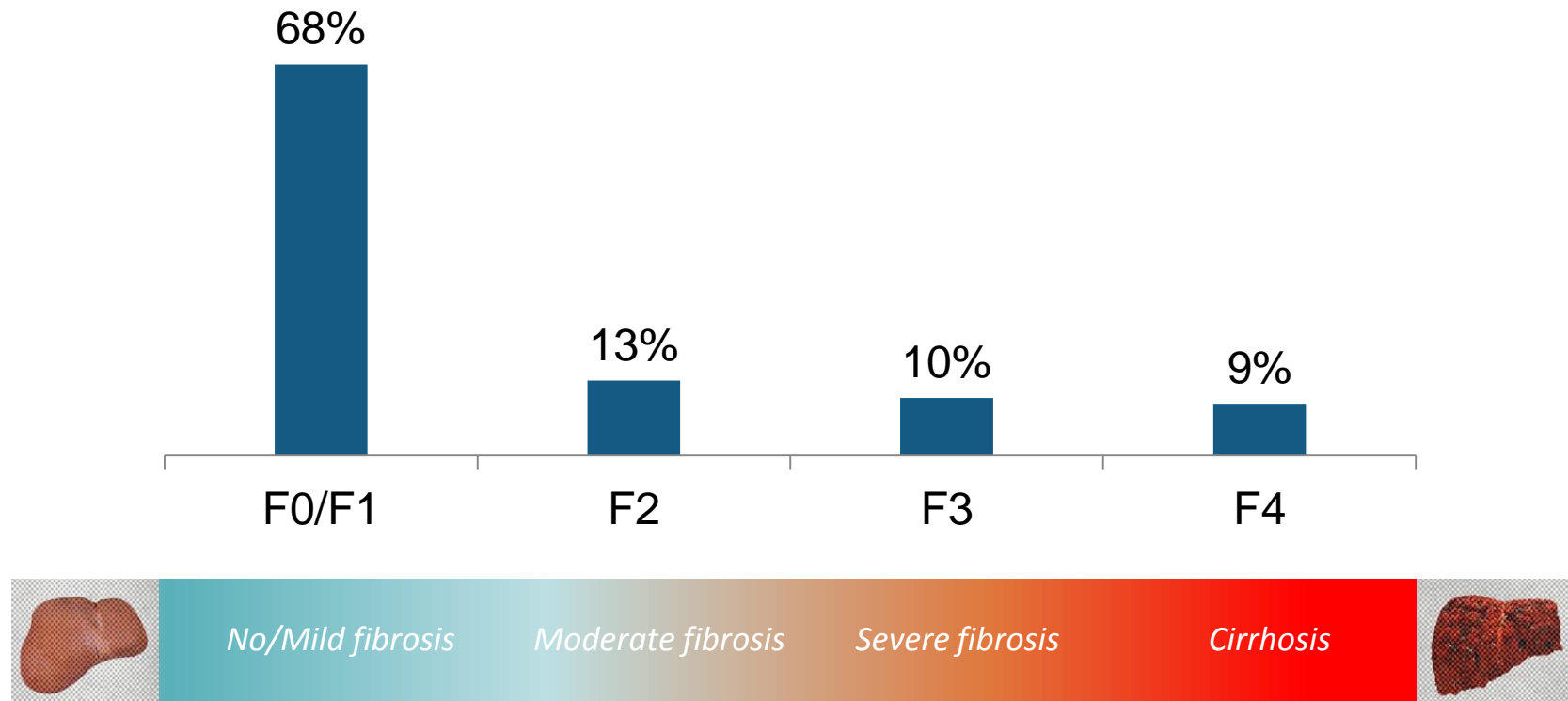
# Results

## Preferred liver disease assessment method



# Results

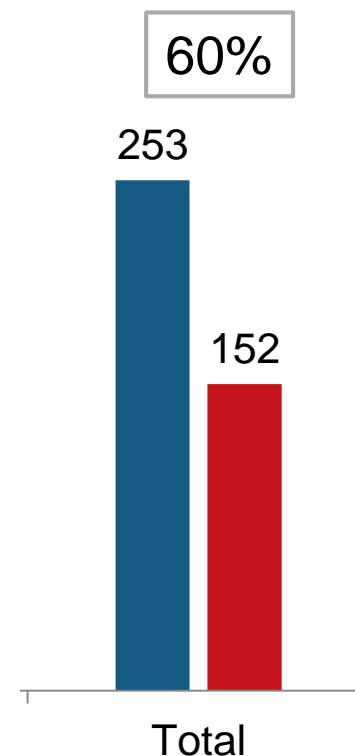
## Liver disease burden, baseline



# Results

## Follow-up (n=152)

■ Enrolled ■ Follow-up



# Discussion

## Implications

- Better understanding of liver disease burden
- Improve upon educational interventions
- Increase non-invasive liver disease assessment
- Prioritise treatment



# Acknowledgements

## LiveRLife Participants

### Supervisors

A/Prof Jason Grebely, Prof Greg Dore, Prof Carla Treloar

### The Kirby Institute, UNSW

Prof Gregory Dore

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Newcastle Pharmacotherapy Service

Medically Supervised Injecting Centre

Coffs Harbour Drug & Alcohol Service

## Funding



## Student Scholarships

