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Exposure to opioid substitution therapy following hepatitis C notification

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Massive HCV treatment effort is underway in Australia

- Highly effective medicines available on PBS since March
- 26,000 people started treatment March-July 2016
 - *Monitoring hepatitis C treatment uptake in Australia*, Kirby Institute
- Could we eliminate HCV in Australia?

Two out of three Australian OST clients are HCV+

- HCV treatment feasible in OST settings
- With good outcomes
- Especially in conjunction peer-led support services
 - ETHOS study

Who are we treating when we treat in OST?

- Not all HCV+ people who inject drugs use opioids, or want OST
- Many people with HCV are no longer injecting or engaged in treatment for substance use
- What % of people with HCV can be treated through OST settings?

Aim

- What proportion of people with hepatitis C have an episode of OST of sufficient duration to complete HCV antiviral therapy?
- What are their characteristics?

Method

- Data linkage, New South Wales, Australia
- HCV notifications (1993-2012) linked to OST and other health data
- 16 continuous weeks of OST minimum suitable to complete a 12 week course of HCV therapy

Among 96,888 people with an anti-HCV+ notification:

N (%) male	60,661 (63)
Median age at notification	35 years
Any OST after notification	25,592 (26)

Among 25,592 people with an anti-HCV+ notification and post-notification OST

- No sex difference in OST after notification
- People with OST after HCV notification were younger at notification (30 years vs 38 years)
- Median duration of OST: 24 weeks

Among those who sought OST, most had more than 16 consecutive weeks:


	% of those with OST after notification	% of total HCV cohort
≥16 weeks OST	90%	24%
≥16 weeks OST in 2013	45%	12%


Targeting HCV therapy to OST settings will contribute to reducing disease burden

- Will reach a somewhat younger group
 - Less advanced disease
 - More likely to still be injecting and sharing injecting equipment
- Need to consider other strategies for people who no longer inject / not engaged with services for people who inject drugs

Conclusions

- Around 12% of people with hepatitis C may be accessible in opioid treatment settings in NSW
- Denominator is people who have been tested (i.e. not including undiagnosed infections)
 - Probably still at least 10%
- Need to understand disease stage of people in contact (and not) with OST system

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