



Kirby Institute

## Qualitative study of the decisions and experiences of people who inject drugs who received a liver disease assessment as part of a liver health promotion campaign: The LiveRLife Study

A.D. Marshall<sup>a</sup>, C. Treloar<sup>b</sup>, G.J. Dore<sup>a</sup>, J. Grebely<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> The Kirby Institute, UNSW Australia, NSW, Australia

<sup>b</sup> Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW Australia, NSW, Australia



### LiveRLife Campaign (2014)

Tailored liver health promotion campaign designed to enhance liver disease assessments (FibroScan<sup>®</sup>) in the drug and alcohol setting among persons with a history of injection drug use

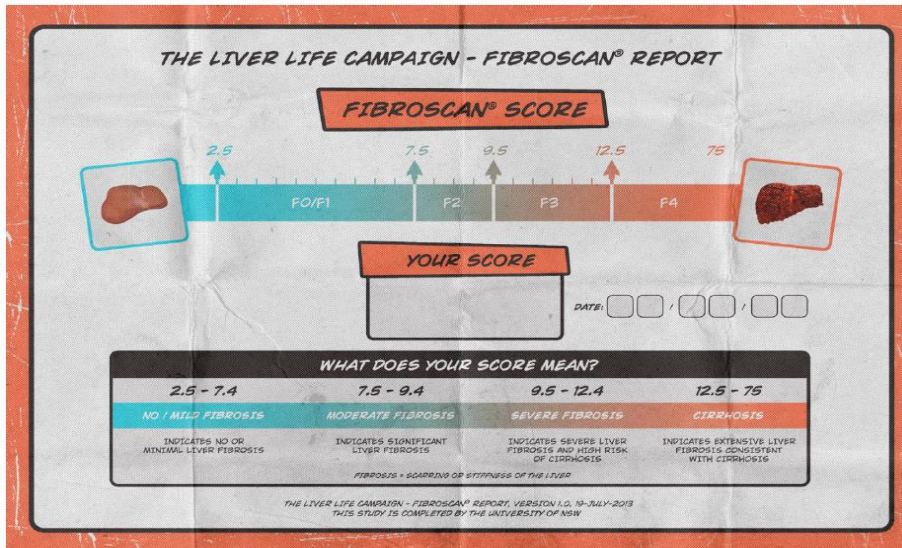
#### Study Population

- Prospective cohort design
- Aged  $\geq 18$  years, history of IDU
- No liver biopsy or FibroScan<sup>®</sup> in prior two years
- No current or previous HCV Tx

#### Recruitment

- 1 healthcare facility, 2 OSTs & 1 injecting centre in New South Wales

## LiveRLife Resource



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## LiveRLife baseline population (n=253)

- Avg. age 43 yrs., 68% male, 23% ATSI, 75% HCV<sup>+</sup> (68% RNA<sup>+</sup>)
- 71% injected in the past month
- 60% returned for 2-4wk. LiveRLife follow-up
- 19% advanced fibrosis (≥F3)
- $P < 0.001$  preferred FibroScan®

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## Qualitative follow-up study (2015 – 2016)

The study aims were to assess...

- Motivations for receiving a liver disease assessment
- Understanding of hepatitis C and its association with liver disease
- Interpretation of FibroScan® score and subsequent health behaviours

**Health Literacy:** the cognitive and social skills which determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, **understand and use information** in ways which promote and maintain good health

(WHO, 2016)

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## Methods

	Mild/mod. fibrosis (F1/F2)	Advanced fibrosis (F3/F4)	Total
Attended follow-up			
No follow-up			

### Study Population

Participation in LiveRlife  
FibroScan® score

### Data Collection

2 OSTs, 1 injecting centre  
Semi-structured interviews  
Audio-recorded; transcribed

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## Results

	Mild/mod. fibrosis (F1/F2)	Advanced fibrosis (F3/F4)	Total
Attended follow-up	11 <sub>(77)</sub>	12 <sub>(22)</sub>	23 <sub>(99)</sub>
No follow-up	8 <sub>(60)</sub>	2 <sub>(13)</sub>	10 <sub>(73)</sub>
	19 <sub>(137)</sub>	14 <sub>(35)</sub>	<b>33<sub>(172)</sub></b>

### Study Population

Participation in LiveRlife FibroScan® score

### Data Collection

2 OSTs, 1 injecting centre  
Semi-structured interviews  
Audio-recorded; transcribed  
Thematic analysis

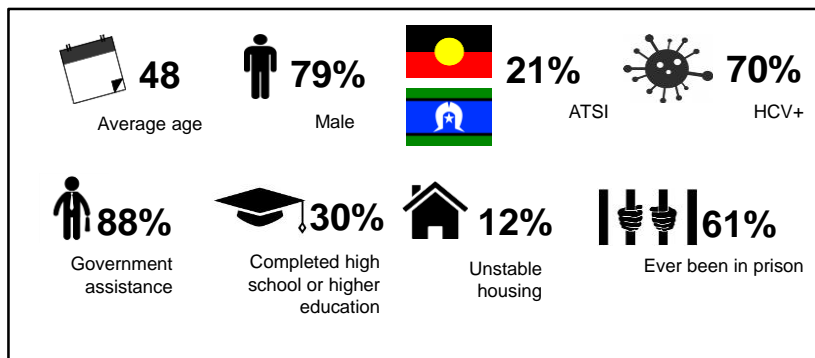
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## Results (n=33)

70% returned for follow-up

61% injected in past mon.

42% advanced fibrosis (≥F3)



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## Results

### Motivation to receive liver disease assessment

- Opportunity to gain access to new knowledge

*Just to check the liver to see how it was because **I knew I had the hep.***

- **James**, F1/F2, follow-up, age 54 yrs.

- Incorrect connections between drug use and chronic liver disease
  - Supported by baseline LiveRLife data (knowledge survey)
  - Sources of incorrect health knowledge

*I wanted to really see **how the drugs really do affect your liver.***

- **Sam**, F1/F2, follow-up, age 47 yrs.

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## Results

### Interpretation of FibroScan® score

- The majority had a correct interpretation of liver disease based on score

*[The healthcare practitioners] said it was in **good condition for someone who's been using like I have.** The only drug I use is amphetamines now; they're probably the better ones for you.*

- **Jack**, F1/F2, follow-up age 59 yrs.

- Scores prompted discussions regarding health behaviours

*I: As soon as you found out your score, did you tell anyone?*

*P: I went up to [nearby clinic] and I saw my doctor and let [them] know and then from there. **I slowly reduced on my alcohol drinking.***

- **Stacy**, F1/F2, follow-up, age 32 yrs.

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## Results

### Interpretation of FibroScan® score

- FibroScan® scores changed perceptions of health (+/-) for some
- Linkage to HCV therapies was prominent in healthcare discussions

*It's only because of the feedback, the FibroScan® I've had done...all that has made me **just keep wanting to go forward.***

- **Derek**, F1/F2, no follow-up, age 52 yrs.

*I just imagined that it would be less than what it was and I was shocked...they showed me on the scale where it was...straight away I started panicking. I didn't think it would be anywhere near that bad....**I didn't show any signs of hep C.***

- **Jacob**, F3/F4, follow-up, age 47 yrs.

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## Results

### Interpretation of FibroScan® score

- Importance of developing a tool that can be understood by others
- FibroScan® scorecard served as a visual reminder

*I remember that this was the **first FibroScan® that really told me a lot...**my mother saw it and then she pointed out where I was...the degree of cirrhosis, it made me definitely want to follow up with [HCV] treatment. **Hearing it but then seeing it in front of my eyes...it just seemed to be two completely different things...**I'd never really been clean in any part of my adult life until that piece of paper.*

- **Paul**, F3/F4, follow-up, aged 43 yrs.

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## Discussion

### Health Literacy

- Confusion about drug use and connection to liver health persists
  - Impacts health-seeking behaviours?
- Targeted liver health education for various subgroups
- Managing patient expectations of FibroScan® scores post-Tx
- Loss to research follow-up ≠ lack of engagement in services
- Visual, tangible FibroScan® scorecard helped to improve capacity to understand & apply new knowledge

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## Acknowledgements

### LiveRLife Participants

#### Supervisors

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