

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Integrating primary and secondary care to optimise hepatitis c treatment: Development and evaluation of a multidisciplinary educational 'Masterclass' series

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Background: In Ireland and the EU, chronic hepatitis C (HCV) infection is responsible for a considerable health and economic burden. It is increasingly being recognised that addressing this global challenge requires effective cooperation between primary and secondary care and multidisciplinary approaches to care. As part of a project to integrate primary and secondary care for patients at risk of, or infected with HCV ('Hepcare Europe'), we developed a Multidisciplinary Educational Masterclass Series for healthcare professionals working in primary care. This paper aims to describe and evaluate the series and examine how this model might be implemented in practice.

Methods: From local general practice, NGOs and Addiction Treatment Services, GPs and other healthcare professionals working in primary care were invited to two one-day symposiums (Hepatitis C Masterclass) which examined how to prevent new infections, why / how to screen, new approaches to diagnosis and treatment, treating coexisting problem alcohol use.

Results: 34 healthcare professionals attended the two masterclasses. 100% of participants 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the Masterclass helped them "appreciate the role of primary care" and "secondary care" in "the management of patients with HCV" as well as "describing new approaches to assessment (Transient Elastography testing)" (96-100%) and "treatment" (85-96%) of patients with HCV. In regards to making an integrated model of care happen in practice, 100% of participants indicated the importance of a "designated nurse to liaise with hospital services" and that "educational programmes" (91-100%) and "computerised-decision making" (88-92%) would be also be of value.

Discussion: This paper highlights the potential importance of integrated approaches to healthcare in optimising hepatitis C care in the community and identifies strategies that can enhance effective implementation.

McCombe; Integrating primary and secondary care to optimise hepatitis c treatment:
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Keywords: integrated care; hepatitis c; multidisciplinary education
