

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

HEPCARE EUROPE: Bridging the gap in the treatment of Hepatitis C

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Background: Hepatitis C (HCV) infection is a major cause of chronic liver disease and death. Injecting drug use is the main route of transmission in most countries. It is estimated that one million people who have injected drugs may be living with HCV in the EU. Complex barriers mean many are unaware of their infection and few have received treatment. HEPCARE EUROPE, an EU-supported project at four member state sites (Ireland, UK, Spain, Romania), aims to improve identification and treatment of HCV, especially focusing on vulnerable populations.

Methods: A consortium led by UCD School of Medicine, with partners in University College London, University of Bristol, Servicio Andaluz de Salud (Seville), and Spitalul Clinic Dr Victor Babes (Bucharest), will develop, implement and evaluate a new HCV Care service model ('HEPCARE').

Results: HEPCARE will include: HepCheck: intensified screening of at-risk and vulnerable populations; HepLink: improved linkage between primary and secondary care; HepEd: multidisciplinary, inter-professional education for healthcare professionals; HepFriend: peer education to assist vulnerable populations in accessing care; HepCost: examination of cost-effectiveness of HEPCARE. Feasibility, acceptability and likely efficacy of HEPCARE will be evaluated.

Conclusions: HEPCARE has the potential to improve HCV diagnosis and treatment and reduce related morbidity and mortality.

Keywords: integrated care; hepatitis c
