

POLICY APPROACHES TO TACKLING HEPATITIS C IN SPAIN

Direct-acting antivirals (DAAs) have helped cure nearly 100,000 cases of Hepatitis C in Spain. But more remains to be done.



A disease successfully targeted

Between 2015 and 2018 in Spain...

Remaining cases in Spain

Estimates vary between
150,000
and
200,000
infected people



Source: Ministry of Health

Current status of Hepatitis C elimination programme



Eligibility for DAA drugs has boosted new patient numbers to around **2,264 per month** (November 2016 to October 2017)



The flow of new HCV patients has **slowed recently** because of complex health and detection systems



Remaining challenges

Micro-elimination is a key strategy that focuses on specific population groups, such as:

- Prison inmates
- Intravenous drug users
- Men who have sex with men
- Migrants



'Test and treat' strategy: **Similar to the strategy used to fight HIV, the HCV programme could use a rapid point-of-care test, and treatment can start within seven days**

Population screening could save lives and reduce demands on Spain's healthcare budget, but delivery challenges remain. **Primary care could help**

WHO targets on Hepatitis B & C:
90% of people diagnosed
and
80% treated by 2030

Current patient pathway could be further simplified

Standard pathway:



STEP #1
Primary care physician takes blood sample for testing and initiates referral



STEP #2
Laboratory tests for presence of HCV antibodies



STEP #3
Hospital specialist confirms diagnosis (including genotype) and tests for level of fibrosis



STEP #4
Hospital specialist prescribes DAAs



STEP #5
Follow up test to check that patient is free of HCV

Prison inmates pathway:



STEP #1
Prison doctor obtains permission



STEP #2
Prison doctor screens for presence of HCV antibodies



STEP #3
Patient transferred to specialist hospital for scans and treatment



STEP #4
Patient transferred back to prison



STEP #5
Patient transferred back to hospital for follow up test to check that patient is free of HCV