**IDENTIFYING THE SOCIAL CAPITAL OF MEN IN PRISON SCREENING POSITIVE FOR HCV**

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**Introduction:** Social capital theory has been developed across a number of disciplines including social science, economics, health, public policy and governance and has been measured across numerous social entities including the home/family, community, and at city, regional, and national levels. Common dimensions of social capital include trust and safety, reciprocity, formal and informal networks, community, civic engagement, culture, health and wellbeing, and agency. Whilst a number of social capital measures exist in the mainstream, no measures have been designed to identify social capital among men in prison, specifically those living with hepatitis C (HCV). This study sought to identify the dimensions of social capital among this population group and identify sources of social capital which might predict HCV treatment access whilst incarcerated.

**Methods:** In-depth interviews were conducted with thirty male inmates at three correctional centres in NSW. Participants had all screened positive for HCV. Analysis was completed using NVivo software.

**Results:** A number of the dimensions from existing mainstream measures of social capital were also found within the prison environment with some variation in the descriptors of the themes between prison and outside the prison setting. Maintaining contact with family (informal networks) on the outside was frequently described as a source of social capital. Relationships with prison staff (trust and safety) were found to influence the experience of inmates accessing treatment (health and wellbeing). Post-release planning was an indicator of ‘agency’.

**Conclusion:** Sources of social capital may be constructed and accessed differently in prison than in mainstream society, particularly among people screening positive for HCV. It is likely that an inmate’s social capital influences their experience of treatment. If positive social capital influences the uptake of treatment, interventions that promote social capital could be used to improve health outcomes of prisoners.

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