

HEPATITIS C VIRUS TESTING UPTAKE AMONG HOSPITALIZED PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS: OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE THE HCV CARE CONTINUUM

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Background:

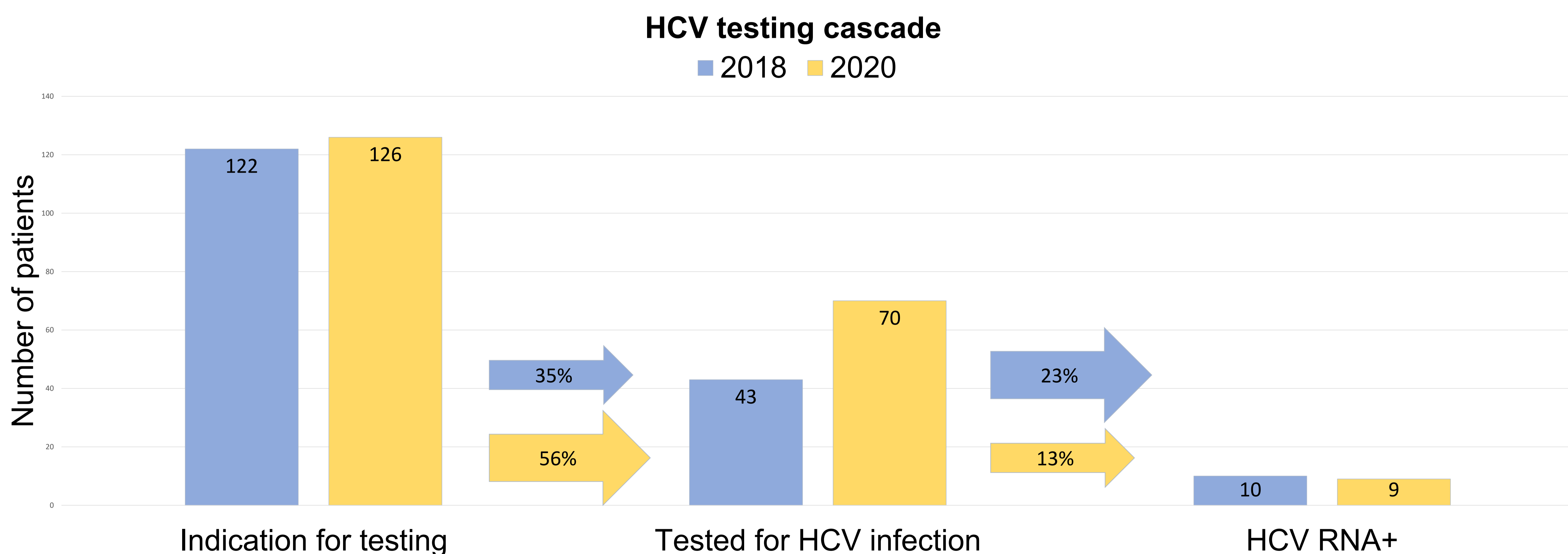
Hospitalization can be an opportunity for HCV testing among people who inject drugs (PWID). Prior to a trial of immediate HCV treatment among hospitalized PWID (OPPORTUNI-C) a campaign was launched targeting hospital staff to increase awareness of HCV infection.

Aim:

The aim of this study was to assess HCV testing uptake before and after the campaign.

Methods:

A random sample of PWID admitted for inpatient care at departments of internal medicine and psychiatry, Lovisenberg Diaconal Hospital, within calendar years 2018 and 2020 were identified by relevant ICD-10 codes for injecting drug use and injection-related infectious diseases.



Results:

Testing uptake during hospitalization increased from 35% (43 of 122) in 2018 to 56% (70 of 126) in 2020 (OR 2.4; 95% CI 1.4-4.0). The increase in testing was more pronounced in psychiatry (OR 3.0; 95% CI 1.4-6.4) than in internal medicine (OR 2.0; 95% CI 0.95-4.2). HCV RNA prevalence among tested individuals decreased from 23% (10 of 43) in 2018 to 13% (9 of 70) in 2020.

Conclusion:

HCV testing uptake increased among hospitalized PWID following an HCV awareness campaign. Hospitalization is an excellent opportunity to improve HCV testing uptake among PWID.