

Implementation of Blood Borne Virus Testing in A Forensic Psychiatric Unit

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Conclusions



Uptake of testing was generally high and implementation of DBST testing within the admission process was feasible.



HCV antibody prevalence appears higher than in the general population and further work in wider forensic populations would be valuable to explore this.

Background

- Forensic units are secure inpatient settings connected to the criminal justice system housing patients with complex mental health needs
- This cohort may have similar risk factors for blood borne viruses (BBVs) to those in the prison population, historically not have been offered testing

Objectives

- To explore the feasibility of offering BBV testing to patients in a medium secure forensic unit in Kent, UK
- To explore the feasibility of implementation of BBV testing into the admission pathway
- To ascertain the prevalence of hepatitis C virus antibody (HCV Ab), hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevalence within the population

Methods

- Dry blood spot testing (DBST) training and testing kits were provided to the forensic unit with the aim of offering all patients a BBV test.
- The DBST panel included hepatitis C virus (HCV), hepatitis B virus (HBV), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and syphilis.
- Staff training was delivered by medical scientists from Gilead Sciences and a pathway to allow rapid access to HCV treatment was developed with King's College Hospital.

Effectiveness

- Offer of testing was 100% (95/95).
- Uptake of testing by patients was 96.8% (92/95).
- 3 patients were positive for HCV antibodies with none being RNA positive.
- 1 patient tested positive for previously undiagnosed HIV and was referred for treatment. 1 patient initially tested HBsAg+ but was found to be negative on confirmatory testing.
- Following on from the testing of the inpatient population, opt-out BBV testing has been routinely implemented as part of the admission process.

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Disclosures:

- Gilead plays an active role in the design and execution of the activities with Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust as part of the NHS England HCV Elimination Program.

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