Factors associated with undiagnosed hepatitis C infection among people who inject drugs: missed opportunities for diagnostic testing in the United Kingdom (UK).

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**Background, Aims & Method**

- People who inject drugs (PWID) typically have a high prevalence of hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection.
- The development of very effective antivirals means that diagnosis of HCV is increasingly important to reducing illness and death.
- An annual voluntary unlinked-anonymous survey obtains dried-blood spot samples and questionnaires from PWID accessing services across the United Kingdom (except Scotland).
- Data from those participants in 2013 who were anti-HCV positive and who had injected during the preceding year was used. (N=934; mean age 37 years; 26% were women; 7% had been born outside of the UK; 91% had injected heroin, 53% crack, & 29% amphetamine).
- Using self-reported data on diagnosis, those who were ‘unaware’ of having been infected with hepatitis C were compared to those who were ‘aware’.
- Health service use among those with unaware was also examined.
Overall, 48% were *aware* that they had ever been infected with hepatitis C.

Factors associated with being *aware* of having been infected with hepatitis C:

- Age (increase)
  - AOR = 1.05, 95% CI (1.03-1.07)
- Injected crack*
  - AOR = 1.48, 95% CI (1.13-1.92)
- Injecting with needle/syringe previously used by someone else*
  - AOR = 1.56, 95% CI (1.08-2.25)
- Born in the UK
  - AOR = 1.80, 95% CI (1.08-2.99)

Among the those *unaware*, 22% had never had a diagnostic test.

Current and recent service uptake among those *unaware* of having been infected with hepatitis C:

- Ever used NSP
- In addiction treatment
- Seen a General Practitioner*
- Emergency department*
- Walk-in/Minor injury clinic*
- Genitourinary medicine clinic*

* During the preceding 12 months
Conclusions

Overall, half (52%) were *unaware* that they had been infected with hepatitis C.

Our findings indicate:-

- **Those groups of PWID where the uptake of hepatitis C testing needs to be improved most, i.e.**
  
  ✓ **younger PWID**, those **born in the UK**, those **not injecting crack** or **not sharing** injecting equipment as they were **less** likely to have their hepatitis C infection diagnosed.

- **The settings where the offer and/or the acceptance of hepatitis C testing needs to be improved, i.e.**
  
  ✓ **specialist services for PWID** and **primary care**, as those who were unaware of having been infected with hepatitis C made extensive use of these types of service.
Thank you for your attention

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