Hepatitis C in VA - 2015

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Summary

- VA is the largest single provider of care in the US for chronic hepatitis C virus infection (HCV)
- VA is facing an epidemic of costly, life-threatening complications in HCV patients
- VA is planning on treating the majority of HCV patients in care by 2020
VHA and US HCV Cascades of Care

- Diagnosed with HCV
- Linked to HCV care
- Treated with HCV antivirals
- SVR

Percent of total estimated HCV-infected population

VHA vs National U.S.*

* National U.S. estimates were derived from the following sources: diagnosis-Spradling, 2012; linked to HCV care- Holmberg, 2013; receipt of antivirals and SVR- Yehia, 2014. VHA estimates from VHA National HCV.
Liver cancer cases in VA HCV patients are increasing rapidly

*Median survival for all patients is <24 months
VA HCV testing initiatives

- Official policy change to birth cohort testing (Jan 2014)
- Electronic clinical reminder (under deployment)
- Provider education (ongoing)
- Social marketing campaigns (ongoing)
- Data feedback (ongoing)
Testing and Diagnosis

• Field-based projects to increase HIV and HCV testing among homeless Veterans

• Increasing focus on increasing screening in the Birth Cohort (1945-1965)
  – 65% currently tested

• Implementation of a national clinical reminder for HCV incorporating birth cohort testing

• Currently >90% positive antibody assays in VA have confirmatory testing done
VA recommends hepatitis C antibody testing (anti-HCV) for all veterans at risk for infection. Testing requires informed consent. Verbal consent is sufficient; written consent is not required.

VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (NCP) Guidance Statement: Screening for Hepatitis C

Screening

- Order anti-HCV lab test – if the patient gives verbal consent...
- Record prior or outside hepatitis C antibody screen.
- Stop Screening: Hepatitis C antibody screen not clinically indicated.
- Defer antibody screening for 4 months
- Veteran declines hepatitis C antibody screen.
HCV anti-viral therapy prevents death

**HCV Cure and Risk of Death**

- **Genotype 1**: 0% (Cured), 5% (Not Cured)
- **Genotype 2**: 10% (Cured), 15% (Not Cured)
- **Genotype 3**: 20% (Cured), 25% (Not Cured)

Backus L *et al* Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol 2011 Jun; 9(6):509-516; VHA HCV CCR
Barriers to anti-viral treatment

• Patient-level
  – Alcohol and substance use disorders
  – Serious mental illness (depression, schizophrenia)

• System-level
  – Linkage to care
  – Availability of integrated mental health services
  – Geographic location relative to patients
  – Provider knowledge/experience
  – Infrastructure (lab, clinical pharmacists, case managers)
  – Funding
VA HCV treatment initiatives

- Allocation of $700M for anti-viral drug purchases
- New drugs put on VA National Formulary (Apr 2014; Jan 2015)
- Updated VA HCV treatment guidelines (Feb 2015)
- Training new providers to increase capacity
- System redesign to improve access
- Monitoring of drug uptake and outcomes (ongoing)
- Treatment of comorbidities
- Provider education (ongoing)
- Data feedback (ongoing)
Increasing access, quality, efficiency

- System redesign
  - VISN HCV Innovation Teams
  - Natl Hepatitis C Resource Center
  - HCV dashboards

- Increasing capacity
  - Training new providers
  - SCAN/ECHO
  - Mini-residencies
  - Educational programs
  - Psychology fellowships

- Clinical Resources
  - Data reports
  - Treatment guidelines
  - Patient education
Uptake of new HCV drugs in VA

Comparison of Uptake of HCV Antiviral Regimens in VA in 2014/2015

Release dates through 5/17/2015
VHA Population Health
Provider Resources
- Print
  - AUDIT-C scoring cards
  - Hepatitis A/B immunization
  - Hepatitis C Support Group
  - Liver Telehealth Guide
  - Brief Alcohol Intervention Teaching Guide
- Web
  - Evaluating LFT abnormalities
  - LiveMeeting Webcasts on HCV
- Conferences
  - Hot Topics in Liver Disease
  - Protease inhibitor training
  - Liver Disease for Primary Care Physicians
  - Mini-sabbaticals/mini-residencies
- Published guidelines
  - Antibody screening and confirmatory testing
  - Co-infected patients
  - Anti-viral therapy
  - Cirrhosis
  - Liver cancer
  - Monitoring treatment

Patient Resources
- Patient Guides
  - Hepatitis C
  - Cirrhosis
  - Liver Cancer
  - New HCV Drugs
  - Liver Transplant
  - Alcohol
  - Managing Treatment Side-effects
- Patient Videos
  - ABCs of Hepatitis
  - Living with Hepatitis C
- Patient tools
  - Drinking diaries
  - Triple therapy workbooks
  - Education classes
  - Toolkits for patients with special learning needs

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