

5 Villa Maraini Foundation integrated HCV care

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Rome, Italy

Villa Maraini Foundation ONLUS provides treatment and rehabilitation for drug addiction through a range of services adapted to individual needs and capabilities¹

~450,000

high-risk drug consumers in Italy in 2016²

4.2 million³

inhabitants in the metropolitan area

Aim: to identify and link to care hard-to-reach HCV+ people who use drugs (PWUD) through harm reduction services provided by Villa Maraini and collaboration with Tor Vergata Hospital

Why is the model needed?⁴

Patient finding and underdiagnosis



A large proportion of PWUD are not included in local social assistance networks and defined as 'hard to reach'



Only 49.6% of those using Services for the Addiction of Drugs (SerDs) are screened for HCV

Restrictions in Italy on:



Lay healthcare workers performing blood tests



Using a 'test and treat' approach in decentralised care

What is the model and how does it work?^{1,4}

Villa Maraini Foundation provides a range of low-, medium- and high-threshold harm reduction, medical and other services in multiple settings

Harm reduction strategy based on 2 core practices

1

Daily drop-in centre



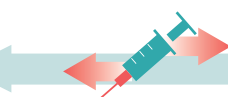
Villa Maraini

2

Street unit



Rome Termini Station and Tor Bella Monaca District



Needle exchange programme (NEP): distribution of free sterile material

Peer education to promote prevention

December 2017: HCV screening and linkage to care (LTC) strategy, targeting hard-to-reach people who inject drugs (PWIDs), is embedded within the NEP

1. Drop-in centre or street unit



OraQuick® Rapid HCV Antibody Test (saliva or whole blood fingerstick)



Pre- and post-test support and counselling



Questionnaire to assess specific risk factors



Facilitated pathway (involves patient navigators in complex cases)



2. Infectious Diseases Clinic at Tor Vergata Hospital

HCV serology

Liver assessment

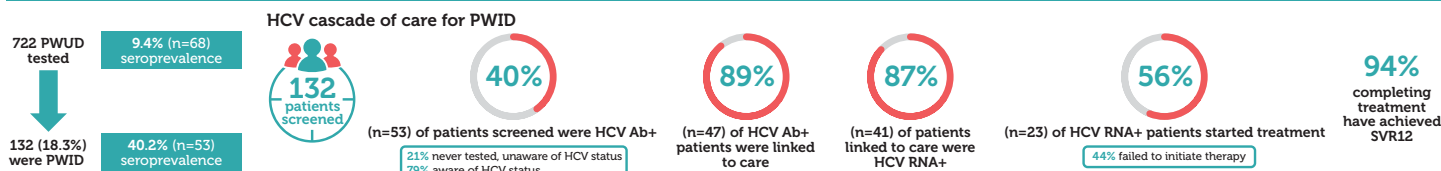
Confirmation of diagnosis

Treatment

Interventions used to enhance HCV testing, LTC and treatment uptake

- Rapid HCV antibody testing at mobile clinics and low-threshold settings (Villa Maraini drop-in centre/street units)
- On-site and outreach case finding activities, including point of care (POC) antibody testing, counselling and education
- Patient navigation and facilitated referral for HCV evaluation
- Non-invasive liver disease assessment using transient elastography

Outcomes and key learnings⁴



Key learnings

- HCV seroprevalence among PWID accessing low-threshold services of the Villa Maraini Foundation is high at ~40%
- A large proportion of HCV+ PWID are aware of their HCV status but not engaged in the care pathway
- A multidisciplinary team and rapid POC testing facilitate effective LTC
- Collaboration with addiction services is required to find 'all' patients and to take advantage of opioid substitution therapy (OST) and mental health services provided

This model demonstrated a high seroprevalence of HCV among PWID accessing Villa Maraini Foundation services and that embedding HCV screening and LTC within pre-existing low-threshold harm reduction services is an effective strategy in this fragile and high-risk population

1. Fondazione Villa Maraini ONLUS. Annual Report 2018. Available at: https://issuu.com/villamaraini/docs/bilanciosociale_eng_ver_web (accessed July 2019); 2. Nava FA, et al. Acta Biomed 2018;89(suppl 10):33-41; 3. World population review - Rome. Available at: <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/rome-population/> (accessed September 2019); 4. Teti E, personal communication, unpublished data