

Most People in Homeless Shelters Are Satisfied With Hepatitis C Treatment

Assessing patient-reported outcomes can support treatment for hard-to-reach populations.

June 4, 2021 By [Sukanya Charuchandra](#)

Individuals living in homeless shelters seeking antiviral therapy for [hepatitis C](#) are generally satisfied with the level of care they receive, according to study results published in the [Journal of Viral Hepatitis](#).

Gaining insight into patients' experiences with [treatment for hepatitis C virus \(HCV\)](#) is critical for reaching disenfranchised or otherwise disadvantaged groups. But for unhoused individuals seeking antiviral therapy, such data on patient-reported experience are missing.

So Mandana Khalili, MD, of the University of California, San Francisco, and colleagues evaluated various measures of patient-reported experiences with direct-acting antiviral therapy for hepatitis C at several homeless shelters in San Francisco and Minnesota.

Across four homeless shelters, the researchers assessed the patient-reported experiences of 66 individuals who received antiviral therapy between November 2018 and April 2020.

The following measures were checked: satisfactory communication with the treatment provider, receipt of social support during antiviral therapy, perception of stigma linked to hepatitis C and overall satisfaction with the treatment.

Among the study population, 41 individuals completed the survey at the end of therapy, resulting in a response rate of 62%. The median age of the group was 56 years, and 74% were men. The population was diverse: 45% were Black, 44% were white and 6% were Latino. Further, 35% had an education level beyond that of high school. Some 65% had a history of injection drug use, while 56% had received treatment for substance use disorders. Moreover, 12% of the study population were also living with HIV.

While receiving antiviral therapy for hepatitis C, most individuals lived in homeless shelters, 37% used illegal drugs, 24% consumed alcohol and 14% received psychiatric therapy.

On assessing patient-reported experiences with antiviral therapy, the researchers found that 100% found their treatment providers to be nonjudgmental; indeed, 98% reported that their provider

appeared to care about them. Around 98% reported that people close to them had been supportive of their care. On the whole, 98% were satisfied with their treatment for hepatitis C. The researchers did not identify any patient or clinical factors to help predict patient-reported experiences of stigma, social support deficiencies or satisfaction with antiviral therapy.

“Nearly all (>95%) homeless patients receiving integrated HCV testing and therapy within homeless shelters felt supported and reported favorable views toward their providers and a high level of satisfaction with [direct-acting antiviral] treatment,” wrote the researchers. “As patient-reported experience is key for engagement in HCV therapy, our onsite treatment intervention within shelters can serve as a model of HCV care to enhance treatment uptake in patients experiencing homelessness.”

Click here to read the study in the [Journal of Viral Hepatitis](#).

Click here to learn more about [treatment for hepatitis C](#).

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