



Mater Misericordiae University Hospital  
Ospidéal Ollscoile Mater Misericordiae

# HepCare Ireland- A Service Innovation project



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## Introduction

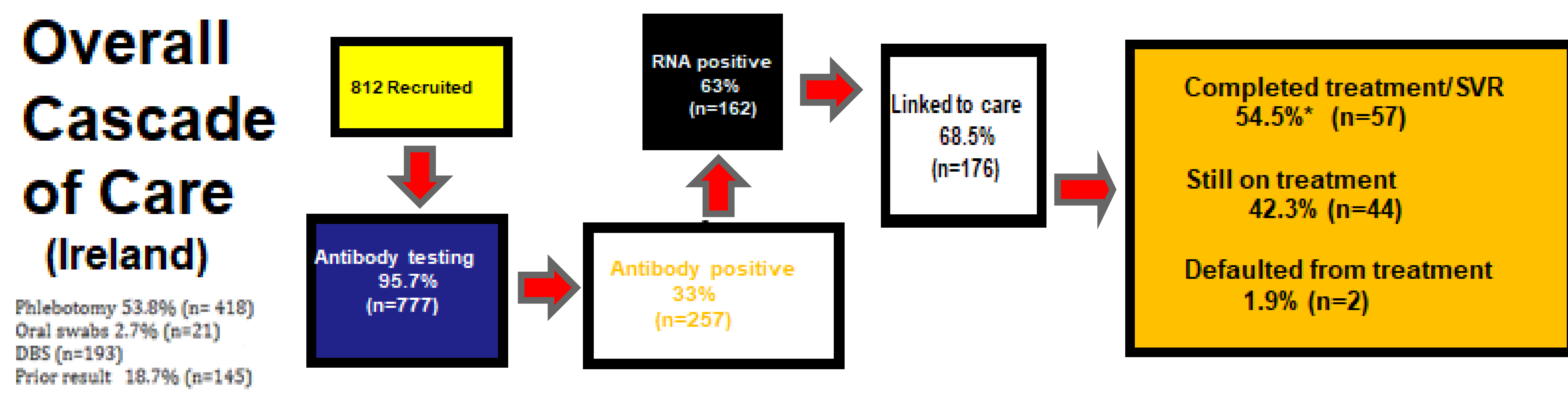
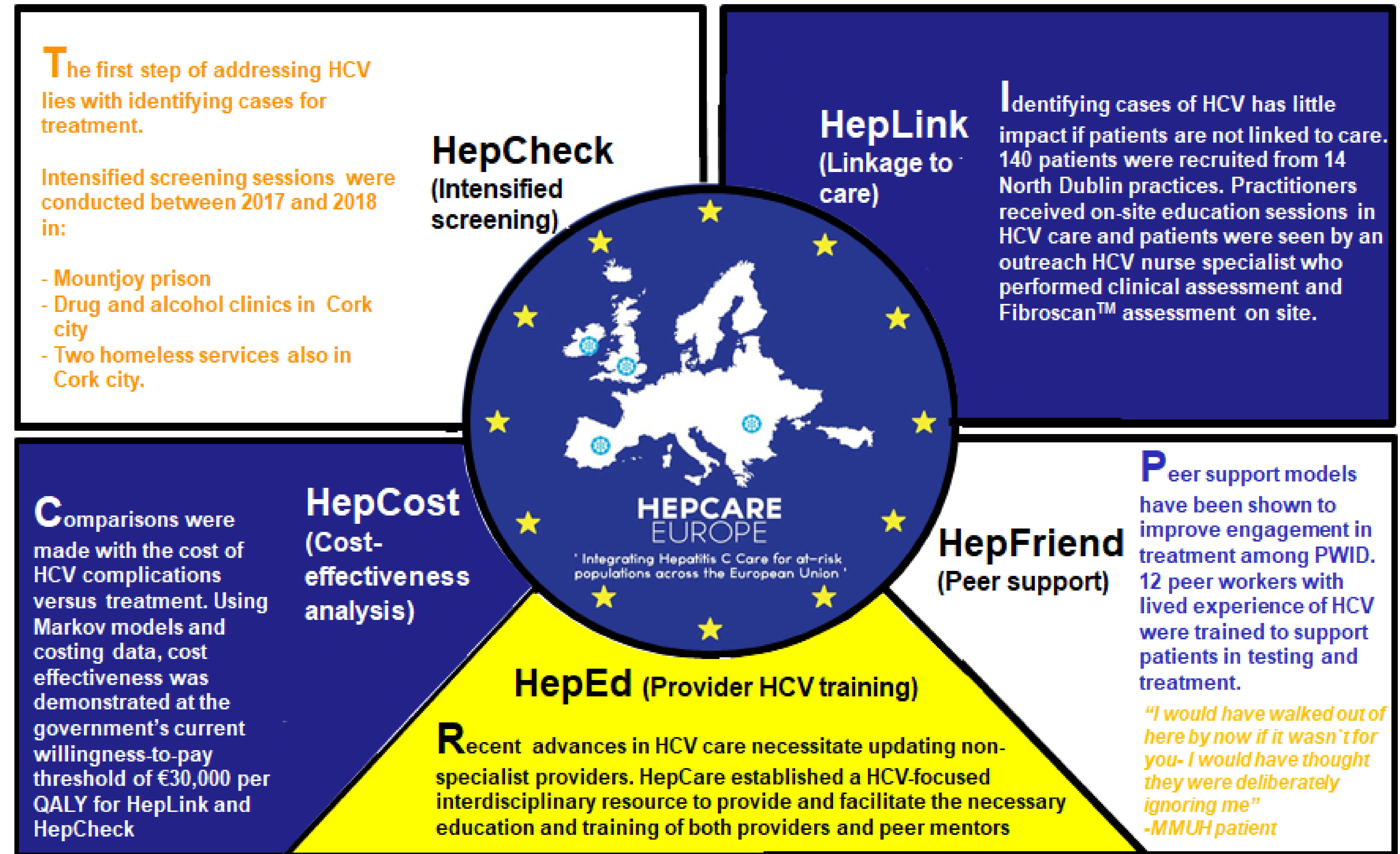
Hepatitis C virus (HCV) remains a major cause of morbidity and death worldwide, with prevalence highest amongst people who inject drugs (PWID), homeless populations and prisoners. The World Health Organization has published targets to be achieved by 2030 as part of its Global Health Sector Strategy to eliminate viral hepatitis. Recent innovations in testing and treatment of HCV mean such goals are achievable with effective infrastructure, political will and funding.

## Methods

'HepCare Ireland' contained five integrated work packages: HepCheck, HepLink, HepFriend, HepEd and HepCost. Interventions included intensified screening, community-based assessment, linkage to specialist care, peer training and support, multidisciplinary educational resources and cost-effectiveness analysis.

## Results

A total of 812 participants were recruited across the three clinical work packages in Ireland. 257 (31.7%) of tested participants had an HCV antibody positive result, with 162 (63.0%) testing positive for HCV RNA. At the time of writing (6<sup>th</sup> of November 2019), 57 (54.8%) of participants put on treatment had achieved SVR12, with 44 (42.3%) still undergoing treatment.



## Discussion

HepCare Ireland demonstrates a cost-effective, scalable and impactful means of improving HCV care in Ireland. High proportions never screened before **HepCheck** underlines the clear need to expand HCV testing, however screening alone clearly will not address Ireland's HCV problem. **HepLink** shows us a framework for integrating specialist and primary care which may be more acceptable to patients. **HepFriend** demonstrated a highly-effective and acceptable means of improving linkage to (as well as retention within) the HCV cascade of care given its high rate of those linked to care proceeding to treatment. Finally, **HepEd** provided the training required for the large numbers of participating professionals and peers across a large variety of sites to address HCV care in a coordinated and impactful fashion.

We propose that if these interventions are expanded at a national scale on an on-going basis that The Republic of Ireland will begin to make meaningful progress in its role among the rest of the world in achieving the targets set by the World Health Organisation in eliminating HCV by 2030.

## References

1) World Health Organisation (2016). Global health sector strategy on viral hepatitis 2016-2020. WHO Document Production Service.

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