Reviewer's report

Title: Hcv Infected Prisoners: should they be still considered a difficult to treat population?

Version: 2 Date: 8 May 2013

Reviewer: Edward Feller

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Major Compulsory Revisions – only 2 references (2011-2012) are more recent than 2009 despite much current, relevant literature… examples below- and modify sentence in Background, 4th paragraph,”Few data are available …in correctional population in Europe”- other references exist as well.

• “Incidence and prevalence of HCV in prisons and other closed settings: result of a systemic review and meta-analysis” Hepatology. 2013.doi.1003/hep.26387
• “Establishment of a successful assessment and treatment service for Australian prison inmates with chronic HCV” Med J Aust. 2010;192; 496-500

Mention and inclusion of more current references for treatment are needed, including potential for improved treatment by newer direct acting –agents….see below for examples


References # 12 and # 13 are essentially the same, # 13 is an update of # 12 (definitely delete # 12 and update #13). A 2009 publication cited as a reference for HCV, a disease with rapidly changing therapeutic options, is outdated and must be updated with a current reference… and new possibilities included in the manuscript text.

More current, relevant publications exist for many of the authors’ cited references. The references should be reviewed and updated with modifications noted in any manuscript revision.

Results and discussion , paragraph beginning with, “Despite advances in treatment …” needs revision. Should focus on incarcerated populations… the
“73% to 87% of patients…go untreated does not refer to any specific population and needs a clear, supporting reference

Methods, 1st paragraph. Data evaluated for 159 patients over a 4-year period in facilities with total average daily census of 2541. Authors state that 38% of Italian inmates are anti-HCV positive, indicating a significant selection bias. Who are these 158 inmates? How were they selected? Consider modification of paragraph on study limitations.

Minor Essential Revisions- Figure 1, algorithm. “Excluded for alcohol or drug abuse without rehab”, N=12. The vast majority of HCV RNA positive inmates are drug abusers…consider a brief mention of guidelines for HCV screening and treatment in IVDUs.

"Minor issues not for publication"- needs careful editing for spelling, typographical and grammatical errors (see, for example, “Results and discussion”, 2nd paragraph). “Not” instead of “no”; “detention” not “detection”; “26 patients” instead of “26%”; “underwent” rather than “undergone to”.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.