

Boilerplate Report

Section 218(2) Hepatitis C Study

Background

Correctional environments by their nature house populations with a high prevalence of risk indicators for HCV infection. Targeted testing may offer an additional method to identify infected persons when added to routine medical evaluation and mandatory HIV testing.

Study Objectives

- Determine the prevalence of anti-HCV (antibody to HCV, which indicates either current or past HCV infection) in the population entering the Michigan Department of Corrections.
- Establish the risk indicators for HCV infection in the Michigan Department of Corrections intake population.
- Determine if the risk indicators for HCV infection can be readily and reliably ascertained.
- Compare targeted HCV testing vs. universal screening for efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Methodology

Population: Based on statistical sampling techniques it was determined that 50 females and 600 males must be tested at intake. The period for testing began in January 2004 and ended in the first week in March 2004.

Risk Assessment Questionnaire: The Risk Questionnaire contained no prisoner identification information. Prisoners were informed of the purpose of the study (through both verbal and written instruction), that participation was voluntary, and that information collected would not become part of their record. The prisoner completed the form prior to the time the regular intake blood samples are drawn. Properly trained staff made sure the prisoner completed the questionnaire and assisted the prisoner, if needed.

Interim Results

Tests and questionnaires were administered to 50 females and 600 males. The results for females indicated 34% were positive for the Hepatitis C antibody. Participation for females during the testing period was almost universal. However, only one third of the male intake population participated in the study and the rate of positive Hepatitis C antibody was significantly different. This caused a review of the methodology used in explaining the project to the male population and identification of variables that may have skewed the data. In order to validate data, additional male prisoners must be tested and be given the questionnaire. Care will be taken to remove the variable(s) that led to the skewed data.