

Country Case Study: Spain



EuroTEST

Working together for integrated
testing and earlier care

Addressing Hepatitis, HIV, STIs and TB

Patient information

Overview

This case study describes experience from an opt-out Hepatitis C (HCV) testing programme implemented in the Emergency Department (ED) of Torrecárdenas University Hospital (HUT), Almería, Spain.

When implementing opt-out screening programmes, clear and accessible patient information is essential to ensure that individuals understand the purpose of testing, the implications of positive results, and their right to decline participation.

Approach

The study team developed an informative video presentation on HCV including information on:

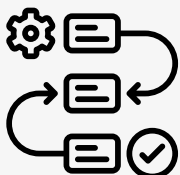
- Symptoms
- Routes of transmission
- ED screening strategy, and available treatment

The video was continuously shown on screens in ED waiting rooms, enhancing patient education and reinforcing transparency.

Lessons learned

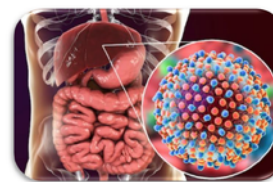


Integrating screening into routine workflows using remnant blood samples and a simple opt-out approach enabled implementation without disrupting ED activity.



Providing patient information materials ensured consistent communication about HCV and supported workflow integration by delivering key information at registration without disrupting emergency department activity.

¿HOW DOES HEPATITIS C PROGRESS?



The virus causes a persistent liver infection that gradually progresses over time and may lead to **LIVER CIRRHOSIS** (30% of patients)

TORRECÁRDENAS



¿HOW IS HEPATITIS C TRANSMITTED?

However...

In up to one-third of cases, it is not possible to identify the route of infection

Any adult may have **Hepatitis C** without knowing it

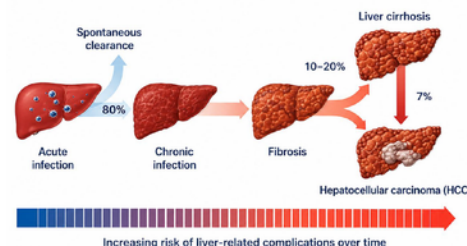


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One in every three liver transplants in Spain is attributable to **HCV**

Natural History of the Disease



- The risk of **decompensation** increases from 5% (first year) to 30% (10 years) after the diagnosis of cirrhosis.
- The 5-year **survival rate** in patients with decompensated cirrhosis is 50%.

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¿HOW DO WE DO IT??

HEPATITIS C SCREENING IN THE TORRECÁRDENAS EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

• AT EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT ADMISSION, PATIENTS WILL BE PROVIDED WITH AN EXPLANATORY LEAFLET

¿WHAT IS HEPATITIS C?

Hepatitis C is a chronic viral infection that, in most cases, causes no symptoms but can lead to serious liver damage.

HEPATITIS C IS CURABLE. There are several, short-term treatments with no side effects that cure the infection in more than 95% of patients.

The Emergency Department offers Hepatitis C screening to all eligible patients attending this service.

If you are between 18 and 60 years old and require a blood test for any reason during your visit to the Emergency Department, you will be tested for Hepatitis C in the same blood sample.

If the result is positive, we will contact you to offer care and treatment in our hepatology clinic.

If the result is negative, you will not be contacted.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the hepatology clinic at 952 31 11 11.

HEPATITIS C SCREENING IN THE TORRECÁRDENAS EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Revocation of consent

I, Mr/Ms, _____ hereby freely and knowingly withdraw my consent for Hepatitis C screening.

In testimony, on the _____ day of _____, 20____

Signed: _____

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE (if applicable): _____

Signed: _____

If you do not want to receive the test, please inform the staff of the Emergency Department.

(For your peace of mind, get tested for Hepatitis C)

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Source

[Camelo-Castillo A, Jordán Madrid T, Cabezas Fernández T, Rodríguez-Maresca M, Duarte Carazo A, Carrodegua A, Medina D, García F, Casado-Martín M. Opportunistic screening for hepatitis C virus infection in an emergency department in Almería, Spain. Emergencias. 2024 Jan;36\(1\):25-32. English, Spanish. doi: 10.55633/s3me/03.2023. PMID: 38318739.](#)

The HCV opt-out screening programme at Torrecárdenas University Hospital was implemented within the framework of the FOCUS public health programme and model, an initiative that supports the implementation of blood-borne virus testing and linkage-to-care strategies in Spain and Portugal.