Local clinic helping to cure Hepatitis C patients

Sunshine Coast University Hospital’s gastroenterology and hepatology department is helping cure hepatitis C sufferers in the Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay.

The Sunshine Coast Hepatitis C Partnership (supported by the Department of Health’s Clinical Excellence Division) is providing an innovative clinic including a mobile scan service to patients across the two regions.

In its first year of operation, the mobile clinic has proven a success, with 85% of Hepatitis C patients now being treated in primary care, relieving congestion in secondary care clinics in hospitals.

The community-based, nurse-led hepatitis C (HCV) clinic offered assessment, education and a free mobile fibroscan service to patients at multiple locations across the region.

Hepatology Clinical Nurse Consultant Kerrin Param said the simple, quick and painless test uses ultrasound to screen for liver disease by assessing the amount of HCV-related scarring in the liver.

“The genotype of Hepatitis C and amount of liver stiffness identified in the fibroscan influences the choice of treatment and follow up required for the patient.

“The scan is followed by a multi-disciplinary team meeting run by hepatologists (liver specialists) who make a treatment recommendations. Treatment is prescribed and monitored by the patient’s GP, with ongoing support from the Hepatology Partnership,” Ms Param said.

“It is great that patients are able to have their treatment initiated, close to home.”

Hepatology Partnership has sent over 350 treatment recommendations to General Practitioners and those at Maryborough Correctional Centre (MCC) in the past 12 months.

Recent advances in medicine mean in 95% of cases Hepatitis C, the disease can be successfully treated with Direct Acting Antiviral tablets taken once a day for 8-12 weeks. The tablets have few side effects.
This short course of tablets can be prescribed by a general practitioner and has few side effects. The national goal is for elimination of Hepatitis C in Australia by 2030.

For more information contact Hepatology Partnership Sunshine Coast on 0408 405 440 and Wide Bay on 0438 067 497.

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