



Peer Advocacy

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Groundswell Homeless Health Peer Advocacy (HHPA)

- Peer Advocates offer one-to-one support for people experiencing homelessness to make and attend health appointments, and overcome the barriers which prevent them from addressing their health needs.
- **“HHPA reduces the use of A&E, missed appointments and unplanned admissions...”**
(Young Foundation HHPA Evaluation 2014).

HALT Hepatitis study hypothesis :

Providing peer support and accompanied referrals to hard-to-reach individuals (homeless or substance misusing) infected with hepatitis B (HBV) or C (HCV) virus will increase likelihood of a full diagnosis and treatment completion...

(Randomised controlled trial, U.C.L & Department of Health)

- Recruit HCV +ve's, either via screening or harvesting known positives from drug treatment services and hostels.
- Randomise to receive either:
 - o Normal care – a referral to secondary care
 - o Intervention – a referral to secondary care with support from a peer from Groundswell.
- Allocation of those infected with HBV to peer support and accompanied referrals.

Peers meet with the patient, chase/re-arrange appointments, accompany them to hospital, take them to other health related appointments, advocate on their behalf etc.

Primary outcomes:

1. Cost effectiveness evaluation of outcomes.
2. Successfully reaching an appropriate clinical endpoint for those infected with hepatitis C.

Secondary outcomes:

1. Sustained virological response to HCV treatment.
2. Successfully reaching an appropriate clinical endpoint, full diagnosis and commencement of treatment, where appropriate, for those HBV infected.
3. Proportion of hard-to-reach with adequate immune response to HBV vaccine.
4. Factors influencing lack of vaccine uptake.