

Opt-out universal hep C screening in emergency dept is useful

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Emergency department opt-out universal hepatitis C virus (HCV)

screening can identify a large number of unrecognized HCV infections, including among those born after 1965, according to research published in the May 15 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

James W. Galbraith, M.D., from the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, and colleagues adopted opt-out universal hepatitis C screening for all [adult patients](#) at four emergency departments during 2015 to 2016.

The researchers found that the overall prevalence of positive results for HCV antibody (anti-HCV) was 9.2 percent among the 14,252 adult patients. The prevalence of positive results for anti-HCV was higher for persons in the [cohort](#) born in 1945 to 1965 than in the cohort born after 1965 (13.9 versus 6.7 percent); 47.8 percent of total cases reactive to anti-HCV were in the younger cohort. The prevalence of positive results for anti-HCV among the cohort born in 1945 to 1965 was significantly higher among non-Hispanic blacks than among whites (16.0 versus 12.2 percent). Among persons born after 1965, the overall prevalence of positive results for anti-HCV was higher among whites than blacks (15.3 versus 3.2 percent).

"Emergency department-based opt-out, universal, HCV screening might play an important role in surveillance and combat of interrelated epidemics of opioid overdose and bloodborne viral infections through harm-reduction interventions and navigation to HCV treatment," the authors write.

Several authors disclosed financial ties to Gilead Sciences.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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