

Hepatitis C Screening in Pregnancy: A Single Center Quality Improvement Experience

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Background: Hepatitis C infection is a preventable but serious illness with more than half the patients developing chronic infection if infected. According to CDC, an estimated 57,500 acute Hepatitis C occurred in United States in 2019. National data revealed increase in reported cases of HCV infection every year from 2009 to 2017. Among these patients, highest rates of incidence in people aged 20-39 years. CDC recommends Hepatitis C screening for everyone at least once in their lifetime and for all pregnant women during each pregnancy regardless of risk factors. We conducted a quality improvement project in our hospital regarding Hepatitis C screening among pregnant women. Our objective was to assess compliance with CDC guideline recommendation regarding Hepatitis C screening in pregnant women and suggest ways to improve it.

Methods: We gathered data of all the pregnant women who presented to the hospital for delivery from September 2020 to May 2021 which were a total of 2735 patients, among these 63 patients were screened for Hepatitis C. We reached out to all our obstetrics and gynecology providers through emails prompting them to screen patients for Hepatitis C during their pregnancy episode. We also educated patients on importance of Hepatitis C screening and effects of acute HCV infection on both child and mother encouraging them to ask providers for screening test if they are not offered one. Printed handouts regarding Hepatitis C screening were distributed among the patients. Then we ran another data analysis report in Epic for all pregnant patients June 2021 to March 2022 which showed 3161 patients presented to hospital for delivery and among them 121 were screened for Hepatitis C.

Results: A chi-square analysis was performed which showed chi-square statistic (x2) 11.271 with a p value of 0.001 indicating significant results. Overall, 65% increase in screening for Hepatitis C among pregnant women presenting to the hospital was observed after implementing Hepatitis C screening protocol.

Conclusion: Hepatitis C screening is recommended in all pregnant women during their pregnancy episode. We requested our Epic IT team to introduce an EPIC Hard Stop protocol for Hepatitis C when pregnant women present for their initial visit and recommended Hepatitis C screening to be made a part of Obstretical triage order panel. We also encouraged all providers to refer all Hepatitis C positive patients to GI to establish care for Hepatitis C treatment.