

Exploring the perspectives of individuals using outreach services to identify cirrhosis: A qualitative study protocol

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INTRODUCTION

Liver disease is a significant public health concern. Deaths from liver disease have doubled in the last 20 years in Wales and early identification and treatment have become a Welsh Government (2022) priority.

Risk factors for developing liver disease are hepatitis B or C, alcohol misuse and obesity. Liver disease often develops asymptotically after exposure to one or more risk factors. As a result, many cases of liver disease are identified late when the disease is more advanced (NICE, 2023).

If we detect liver disease earlier it can improve health outcomes, linkage to care, reduce health inequalities and reduce costs for the NHS (Welsh Government, 2022).



Delivery of a FibroScan service in outreach community settings is one way to improve access to care pathways and equity of care provision for inclusion health populations (NICE, 2023).

To date there is limited use of FibroScan in outreach settings across Wales and a lack of understanding in the literature of the client's perspective on accessing healthcare through this setting.

Peer involvement



- Peer groups have contributed to the development of a study design that is feasible, acceptable, and relevant to the peers.
- Meetings with peer groups were conducted in a homeless setting and in the outreach setting where the research will be conducted.
- Peers were consulted on and contributed to the development of the: topic guide, participant information sheet and reimbursement type.
- Peers informed the process to feedback the findings to those who contributed to the study.
- The approach was underpinned by the UK Standards for Public Involvement (UK Public Involvement Standards Development Partnership, 2019).

Methods

Study Design:

A qualitative descriptive study design will be used

Participants, recruitment and sampling

- Participants who have accessed testing and treatment for Hepatitis C Virus through a community inclusion health outreach service and have been recalled for their FibroScan.
- The FibroScan will be delivered by a hepatology specialist nurse, utilising a drop-in approach to appointments.
- 6-10 participants will be purposefully recruited.

Data Collection

- Semi-structured interviews will be conducted face-to-face in the outreach settings.
- Demographic information will be collected to inform description of study participants, recommendations and transferability of the findings.

Data Analysis

- The data will be transcribed verbatim and managed using NVivo software.
- The data will then be analysed thematically using Braun & Clarke's (2021) reflexive thematic analysis.

Dissemination

The findings of this study will be shared nationally with a broad range of stakeholders:

- Peer networks
- Welsh Government
- Area Planning Boards
- Public Health Wales
- National Harm Reduction Leads for the seven health boards in Wales
- Journals and conferences



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