Myths about Treating Substance Users with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)

In various settings, people with active substance use disorder(s) have been cured of HCV and have low rates of reinfection. The following are common misconceptions about providing HCV treatment to people with substance use disorder(s):

Myth: Since active substance users cannot be treated for HCV, screen patients for drug and alcohol use to determine eligibility for HCV treatment.

Reality: Drug and alcohol use testing does not provide information about eligibility for HCV treatment. The purpose of screening for substance use disorders is to determine who would benefit from treatment and harm reduction support for those conditions.

Myth: People who inject drugs are at high risk of HCV reinfection.

Reality: Data suggest reinfection is rare in people who inject drugs who clear HCV with therapy, even if they continue to inject drugs.

Myth: Providing HCV treatment to people who use substances is not cost effective.

Reality: Completion of HCV treatment even among a modest number of people who use substances is cost effective.

Find clinical resources related to HIV/HCV prevention, care, and treatment here: https://aidsetc.org/hivhcv

Infographic references: https://aidsetc.org/hivhcv

AETC AIDS Education & Training Center Program
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