



Public Health
England

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Laboratory reports of hepatitis C in England and Wales, 2008 to 2018: an update

Health Protection Report

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Laboratory reports of hepatitis C: 2008 to 2018: an update

Due to late reporting of backdated hepatitis C data, annual numbers of confirmed laboratory reports of hepatitis C in England and Wales have changed. From 2008 to 2018 there were 138,883 confirmed laboratory reports of hepatitis C (Table 1).

Table 1: Laboratory reports of hepatitis C by year 2008 to 2018, England and Wales*

Year	Total
2008	8,984
2009	8,949
2010	8,244
2011	10,585
2012	11,752
2013	12,525
2014	13,624
2015	16,064
2016	16,282
2017	15,358
2018	16,516
Total	138,883**

Notes: Individuals aged less than one year are excluded since positive tests in this age group may reflect the presence of passively-acquired maternal antibody rather than true infection or exposure to infection.

* Laboratory reports are not reliable for differentiating acute and chronic infections. Due to late reporting, numbers or each quarter may have changed slightly since their HPR quarterly reports.

** Provisional data

The number of laboratory reports by PHE Centre is presented below. Reports were assigned to a PHE Centre according to i) the patient's place of residence ii) the postcode of the patient's registered GP practice, or iii) the postcode of the source laboratory. From 2008 to 2018, the greatest number of hepatitis C reports were received from London (n=29,496) followed by the North West (n=17,641) and South East (n=16,300) PHE Centres (Table 2). There are 7,138 cases that are currently unable to be assigned to a PHE Centre due to insufficient geography information relating to source laboratory. Work is currently underway to correct this.

Table 2: Laboratory reports of hepatitis C by region, England and Wales (2008-2018)*

PHE Centre	Year											Total
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
East Midlands	630	594	535	711	745	659	734	939	1,106	1,144	1,363	9,160
East of England	688	617	549	842	742	707	766	992	1,212	1,172	1,146	9,433
London	970	851	967	1,992	2,696	3,070	3,741	4,094	4,278	3,618	3,219	29,496
North East	162	263	308	312	295	352	317	310	319	439	758	3,835
North West	1,249	1,538	1,364	1,148	1,234	1,605	1,650	2,151	1,831	1,457	2,414	17,641
South East	1,167	1,205	1,255	1,362	1,496	1,193	1,433	1,771	2,028	1,750	1,640	16,300
South West	1,142	1,004	733	997	1,162	1,037	1,179	1,456	1,350	1,389	1,224	12,673
West Midlands	674	854	771	781	749	783	801	1,187	1,455	1,281	1,053	10,389
Yorkshire and Humber	1,362	1,077	947	1,462	1,316	1,835	1,778	1,888	1,606	1,462	1,471	16,204
Wales***	498	376	363	574	636	844	874	940	756	460	293	6,614
Unknown†	442	570	452	404	681	440	351	336	341	1,186	1,935	7,138
Total	8,984	8,949	8,244	10,585	11,752	12,525	13,624	16,064	16,282	15,358	16,516	138,883**

* Due to back dated and late reporting, annual numbers have changed since their HPR reports.

** Provisional data

***non PHE Centre

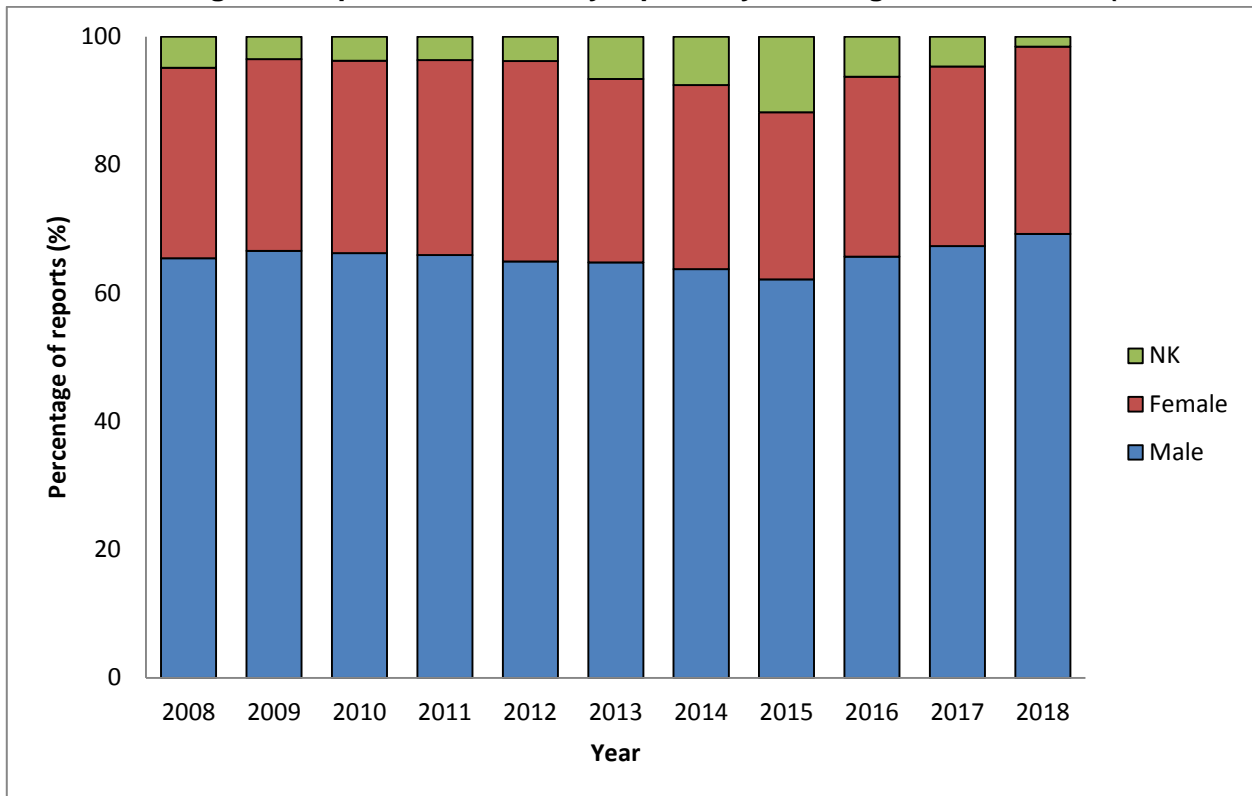
† PHE Centre unable to be assigned due to a lack of geography information

Age and sex were well completed (>93.6% complete) (Figure 1). Where known, males accounted for 69.5% (91,166/131,225) of reports between 2008 and 2018.

From 2008 to 2018, 61.0% of hepatitis C reports were among the 15 to 44 year old age group, a further 38.7% were among the 45 years and over age group, with under 0.3% of reports among the under 15 years old age group.

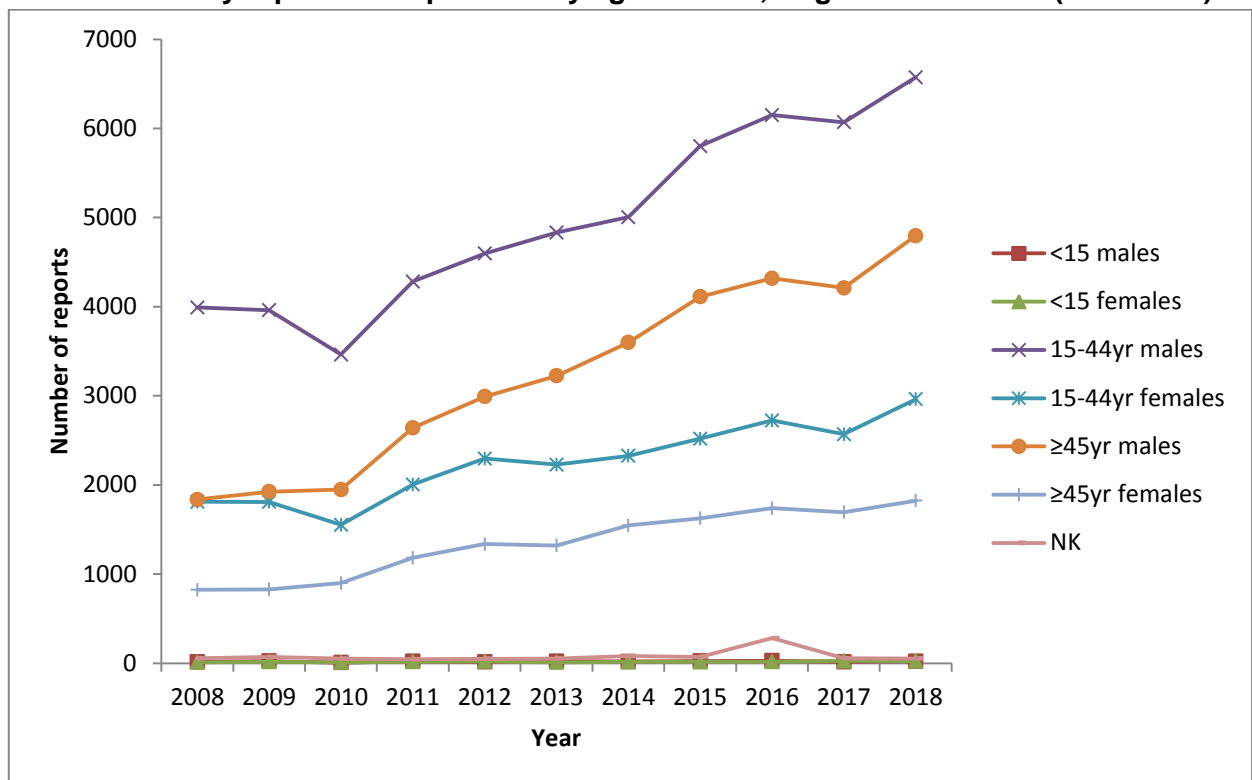
Since 2008, the highest number of reports has consistently been in the 15 to 44 year age group (Figure 2). In addition, there has also been an increase in the proportion of reports among the 45 years and over age group. The proportion of reports among the less than 15 years old age group has remained low at less than 1% per year.

Figure 1: Percentages of hepatitis C laboratory reports by sex, England and Wales (2008-2018)*



* Due to back dated and late reporting, the annual numbers have changed since their HPR reports.

Figure 2: Laboratory reports of hepatitis C by age and sex, England and Wales (2008-2018)*



* Due to back dated and late reporting, the annual numbers have changed since their HPR reports.

Laboratory data - caveats

Backdated HCV testing data from the private laboratory Abbott, (formerly known as Alere), has led to an increase in the overall number of positive HCV reports. In addition, since 2017 one laboratory in the North West of England has undertaken HCV dried blood spot (DBS) testing alongside hepatitis C routine laboratory testing. This single laboratory has taken on testing for a large part of the country however, some samples where geographical information is lacking, maybe incorrectly assigned to this specific laboratory rather than the laboratory from which the sample originated. This DBS testing has led to an increase in the overall number of positive HCV reports. As a result of ensuring all DBS results are included, backdated data (results from 2011 onwards when DBS testing began to be used by services more widely) are contained in the final annual datasets.

Derivation of surveillance data

For this report, laboratory reports from SGSS were processed using Microsoft Access 2010. This process matches the automated process that was used previously to extract and de-duplicate hepatitis C laboratory reports from SGSS.

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About Health Protection Report

HPR is a national public health bulletin for England and Wales, published by Public Health England. It is PHE's principal channel for the dissemination of laboratory data relating to pathogens and infections/communicable diseases of public health significance and of reports on outbreaks, incidents and ongoing investigations.

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