



Public Health
England

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Laboratory reports of hepatitis C in England and Wales: October to December 2019

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Laboratory reports of hepatitis C: October to December 2019

Between October and December 2019, a total of 3339 laboratory reports of hepatitis C were reported to PHE. There was a 13.8% increase in the number of reports compared to the third quarter of 2018 (n=2861). This increase is due to the addition of previously missing backdated confirmed hepatitis C laboratory reports originating from either the private laboratory Abbott (formerly known as Alere), or a laboratory from the North West region.

Since 2017, one laboratory in the North West of England has undertaken HCV dried blood spot 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.

Age and sex were well reported (>98.0% complete); known males accounted for 67.0% (2195/3277) of reports which is consistent with previous quarters and years [1]. Adults aged 25-44 years accounted for 52.2% of the total number of hepatitis C reports.

Table 1. Laboratory reports of hepatitis C in England and Wales, Oct-Dec 2019

Age group	Female	Male	Unknown	Total
1-4 years	3	3	0	6
5-9 years	2	1	0	3
10-14 years	3	5	0	8
15-24 years	46	68	2	116
25-34 years	219	414	12	645
35-44 years	315	722	28	1065
45-54 years	234	582	13	829
55-64 years	141	260	5	406
>65 years	103	104	1	208
Unknown	16	36	1	53
Total	1082	2195	62	3339

Notes:

1. 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.
2. Laboratory reports are not reliable for differentiating acute and chronic hepatitis C infections. Laboratory reports include individuals with a positive test for hepatitis C antibody, antigen and/or detection of hepatitis C RNA.
3. A small proportion of these specimens are diagnosed following dried blood spot (DBS) testing however not all DBS testing is reported by laboratories

In table 2, laboratory reports are presented broken down by Operational Delivery Network (ODN). ODNs were launched in April 2013 following the publication of the NHS England strategy to sustain and develop clinical networks.

ODNs are the networks through which hepatitis C treatment is being delivered across England. Between October and December 2019, 3256 out of 3339 individuals have been allocated to an ODN.

Table 2. Laboratory reports of hepatitis C by ODN, October to December 2019

Age group	Total
Barts	166
Birmingham	259
Bristol and Severn	123
Cheshire and Merseyside	173
Eastern Hepatitis Network	208
Greater Manchester and Eastern Cheshire	297
Humberside and North Yorkshire	185
Kent Network via Kings	31
Lancashire and South Cumbria	115
Leicester	132
North Central London	152
North East and Cumbria	276
Nottingham	138
South Thames Hepatitis Network	194
South West Peninsula	30
South Yorkshire	95
Surrey Hepatitis Services	102
Sussex Hepatology Network	120
Thames Valley Hep C ODN	60
Wessex Hep C ODN	80
West London	167
West Yorkshire	153

Note: ODNs are based on NHS England Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) geographic boundaries. NHS England allocates a primary or lead ODN for CCGs which may cross two ODNs. Bristol and Severn, Surrey Hepatitis Services, and North East and Cumbria were ODNs which between them had 44 individuals that could also be assigned to a second ODN.

Reference

1. PHE (2019). Laboratory reports of hepatitis C in England and Wales, 2018.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/822683/hpr2719_HCV-ann18.pdf

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About Health Protection Report

Health Protection Report 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.

Public Health England,
Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UG
Tel: 020 7654 8000 www.gov.uk/phe
Twitter: [@PHE_uk](https://twitter.com/PHE_uk) Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland

Queries relating to this document should be directed to:
Immunisation and Countermeasures Division, National Infection Service, PHE
Colindale, 61 Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5EQ email: immunisation@phe.gov.uk



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