



Hepatitis C in Wisconsin: Focus on Baby Boomers

Background

Hepatitis C (HCV) is a blood-borne virus that infects approximately 3.2 million people in the United States. The majority of those infected were born between 1945 and 1965 and are referred to as the baby boomer population.¹

- Baby boomers are five times more likely than other age groups to be infected with HCV.
- 75% of individuals in the U.S with HCV infection were born between these years.
- Up to 75% of infected individuals may not know they are infected because they do not have symptoms of the disease.

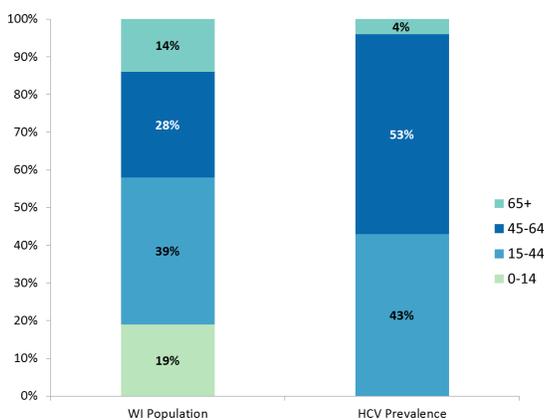
When HCV is undiagnosed and untreated, it can cause adverse health effects, most importantly cirrhosis of the liver, liver cancer, and liver failure.

People born between 1945-1965 are five times more likely to be infected with HCV.

Wisconsin Trends

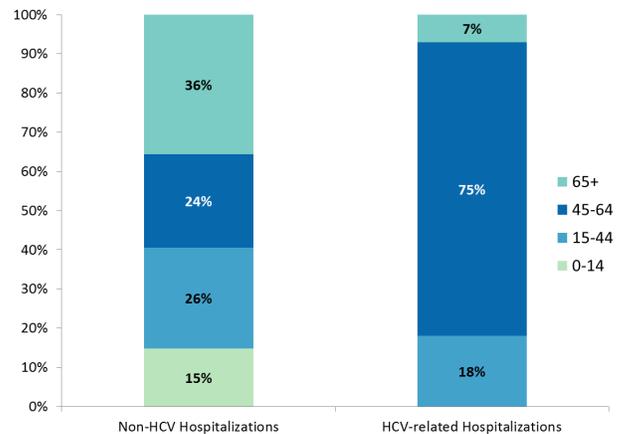
In 2012, baby boomers made up only a quarter of the total population, but made up 53% of all of the HCV cases in the state (Figure 1).²

Figure 1: Ages of Wisconsin Population and HCV Prevalence, 2012



The percent of HCV hospitalizations in baby boomers was three times the percent of hospitalizations for other causes in this age group (Figure 2).³

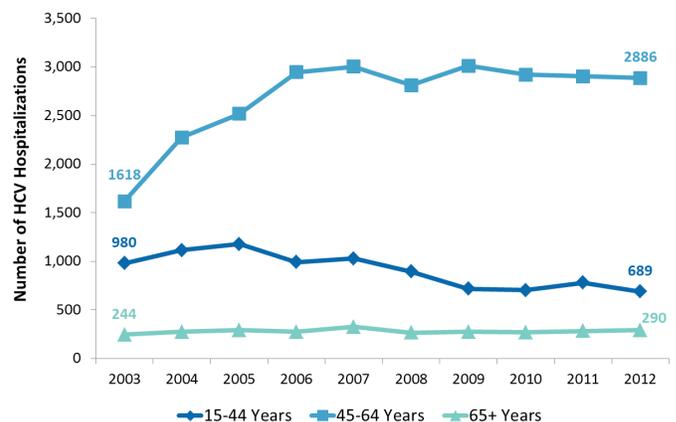
Figure 2: Ages of Non-HCV and HCV-related Hospitalizations, 2012



Similar comparisons can be seen in other health care settings:

- Hospitalizations in HCV-infected baby boomers increased 78% from 1,618 in 2003 to 2,886 in 2012 (Figure 3).
- The rate of hospitalization of HCV-infected baby boomers in 2012 was five times greater than that of infected persons in other age groups.
- 81% of HCV-related liver transplants between years 2009 and 2013 occurred in baby boomers aged 50-64.

Figure 3: Number of Hospitalizations with HCV, by Age Group, Wisconsin, 2003-2012

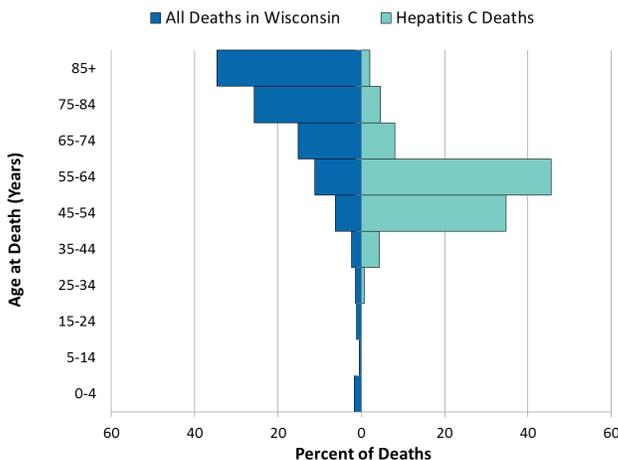


Wisconsin Deaths

The Wisconsin Vital Records Registry contains information on primary and underlying causes of death. When examining age at death, there is a clear difference between persons with HCV-related deaths and those dying from other causes (Figure 4).⁴

- The median age at death with HCV infection as either the primary or underlying cause of death is **57 years**.
- The median age at death without HCV listed as a cause of death is **79 years**.
- **80%** of HCV-related deaths occurred in baby boomers.
- **17%** of non-HCV-related deaths occurred in baby boomers.

Figure 4: Age Distribution of Deaths in Wisconsin, 2009-2011



On average, persons with HCV die 22 years younger than persons not infected with HCV.

Key Point

As the baby boomer population ages, the mortality, hospitalization rate, and overall health care burden of individuals with HCV infection will increase. The unique challenge in this population is identifying individuals who are HCV-positive and supporting them in accessing health care providers who can assist in the assessment and management of HCV infection.



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What can health care providers do?

The U.S Preventive Services Task Force recommends a one-time screening for HCV of all individuals born between 1945-1965...

Encourage all baby boomers to be screened for hepatitis C infection, along with individuals who have any of the following risks:

- Ever injected drugs
- Had a blood transfusion or transplant before 1992
- Have ever been on long-term hemodialysis
- Ever worked in a health care field and was exposed to blood

Stay up to date on treatment advances...

New treatments will require fewer pills, have fewer side effects, shorter regimens, and more efficacy

Additional Resources

AASLD Treatment Guidelines

<http://www.aasld.org/practiceguidelines/pages/default.aspx>

CDC Testing Guidelines

<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HCV/GuidelinesC.htm>

The Epidemiologic Profile of Hepatitis C Virus in Wisconsin, 2014

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/P0/p00860.pdf>

References

1. Smith BD, Morgan RL, Beckett GA, Falck-Ytter Y, Holtzman D, Teo CG, et al., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Recommendations for the identification of chronic hepatitis C virus infection among persons born during 1945-1965. *MMWR Recommendations and Reports*. 2012; 61: (RR-4) 1-32.
2. Wisconsin Electronic Disease Surveillance System, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services. Data include prevalent HCV cases reported as of 3/31/2014.
3. Wisconsin hospital inpatient discharge data for 2003-2012 obtained from the Office of Health Informatics, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services.
4. Wisconsin resident death certificate data for 2009-2011 obtained from the Office of Health Informatics, State Vital Records Office, Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

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