The progression and management of depression and anxiety in chronic hepatitis C patients

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the combined degree of Doctor of Philosophy with Master of Psychology (Clinical)

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June 2015
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT, Australian Capital Territory
AD, anti-depressant(s)
CALD, culturally and linguistically diverse
CBT, cognitive behavioural therapy
CHC, chronic hepatitis C
CI, confidence interval
C-UP, a Unified Program for people with hepatitis C to manage depression and anxiety
DASS, Depression Anxiety Stress Scales
DSM, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
DSP, disability support pension
GP, general practitioner
HADS, Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale
HBV, hepatitis B virus
HCV, hepatitis C Virus
HIV, human immunodeficiency virus
ICD, International Classification of Diseases
IDRS, Illicit Drug Reporting System
IDU, injecting drug use(rs)
IFN, interferon
IQR, interquartile range
K10, 10-item Kessler Psychological Distress Scale
M, mean
MDN, median
MOS-SSS, Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey
NSMHW, National Surveys of Mental Health and Wellbeing
NSW, New South Wales
NT, Northern Territory
OR, odds ratio
QLD, Queensland
RA, rheumatoid arthritis
RAH, Royal Adelaide Hospital
RCT, randomised controlled trial
RR, risk ratio
SA, South Australia
SCID, Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV Axis I Disorders
SCL-90-R, Revised 90 Item Symptom Checklist
SD, standard deviation
SE, standard error
SEIFA, Socio-Economic Index For Areas
SVR, sustained viral response
TAS, Tasmania
US, United States of America
VIC, Victoria
WA, Western Australia
ABSTRACT

In those living with chronic hepatitis C (CHC), co-morbid depression and anxiety are highly prevalent (el-Serag, Kunik, Richardson, & Rabeneck, 2002), leading to diminished quality of life (Häuser, Zimmer, Schiedermaier, & Grandt, 2004), exacerbated physical symptoms (Morasco et al., 2010), increased functional impairment (Dwight et al., 2000), and poorer anti-viral treatment outcomes (Zanini, Covolo, Donato, & Lanzini, 2010). However, there is a dearth of research exploring this co-morbidity and how best to assess and manage it. This body of work aimed to address this gap in the literature in conducting the four studies comprising this thesis.

Study one assessed the acceptability of various mental health treatment options through a postal survey of South Australian CHC outpatients and an online survey of Australians living with CHC in the community. This study found that individual psychotherapy was the most acceptable treatment, followed by bibliotherapy, pharmacotherapy, online therapy, and group psychotherapy. The most important predictor of the acceptability of a treatment was past satisfaction with use of that treatment modality. Study two assessed the progression of depression and anxiety symptoms over a course of between two and five years. This was conducted in a sub-sample of CHC outpatients who responded to the survey used in study one and were also participants of a previous study assessing the prevalence and predictors of depression and anxiety (Stewart et
al., 2012). This study reported a worsening of depression and anxiety over time. Baseline anxiety was the most prominent predictor of future depressive and anxious symptomatology.

Study three examined changes in self-reported rates of mental health problems and service use in regular injecting drug users in the 2006 and 2012 Illicit Drug Reporting System surveys conducted by the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, over half of whom reported also having CHC. This study found that while the rates of self-reported problems increased significantly, there was an accompanying decrease in service use (albeit with a proportional increase in the use of psychologists). Study four involved the development of a treatment protocol entitled “C-UP: A Unified Program for people with hepatitis C to manage depression and anxiety.” A transdiagnostic cognitive behavioural therapy approach was chosen as it has the promise of treating co-morbid depression and anxiety simultaneously, a clinical presentation which is common in people with CHC (el-Serag et al., 2002; Navinés et al., 2012; Stewart et al., 2012). C-UP involves five components which cover psychoeducation, acceptance of distressing emotions, cognitive restructuring, behavioural activation and graded exposure, and relapse prevention. Informal feedback from clinical psychologists, CHC workers, and those living with CHC was overwhelmingly positive. However, a randomised controlled trial and qualitative research is needed to more rigorously assess the efficacy and acceptability, respectively, of C-UP.
When considering the deleterious effects of co-morbid depression and anxiety, it is apparent that a comprehensive and targeted approach on a policy and practice level is needed. While this approach has been lacking to date, it is anticipated that this thesis will lead to an increased focus on the assessment and management of co-morbid depression and anxiety in research, policy, and clinical practice.
DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree. I give consent to this copy of my thesis when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. The author acknowledges that copyright of published works contained within this thesis resides with the copyright holder(s) of those works. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University’s digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge my doctoral supervision panel, comprising my principal supervisor Prof. Deborah Turnbull and co-supervisors A/Prof. Antonina Mikocka-Walus and Prof. Jane Andrews. I greatly appreciate the guidance, criticisms, and financial support that have allowed me to conduct and present this research.

(1) Deborah, thank you for being an amazing principal supervisor over the last three and a half years. I appreciated you giving me the space and trust to work independently while knowing when I may have needed a push to get things done. I always felt assured that I could come to you for advice and support for both PhD related and unrelated matters. Your keen eye for the bigger picture of my research was invaluable and I know my thesis is all the better for your experience and wisdom.

(2) Antonina, I couldn’t have asked for a better principal supervisor when I was just entering the research world in my honours year, and while you were not technically the primary supervisor for my subsequent PhD, it never felt that way. The generosity you have shown with your time and energy throughout my research journey is greatly appreciated. Thank you also for giving me the opportunities to expand my horizons in assisting you with your research as well.

(3) Jane, as with Antonina, it never felt as though you were a co-supervisor. Your unique perspective as a gifted medical practitioner with a keen
insight into the psychological aspects of medical co-morbidities was invaluable in guiding the direction and presentation of my research. You always provided broad and insightful feedback on my drafts which has greatly enhanced the quality of this thesis. I especially appreciated your uplifting humour, enthusiasm, and insights into the medical and academic worlds.

Secondly, I would like to thank Ms. Karen Davies and Dr. Matthew Smout who have supervised my clinical training to date. The clinical psychological aspects of this thesis are undoubtedly shaped by my clinical training and I am indebted to you both for this.

(1) Karen, you were the perfect supervisor when I nervously began my first clinical placement at UniHealth Playford GP SuperClinic. You were supportive, extremely generous with your time, and pro-active in giving me opportunities to learn and grow.

(2) Matthew, I think I learnt as much in my second clinical placement at CTAD as I had in the entirety of my training up to that point and that is largely owing to your supervision. You were able to quickly and easily impart your knowledge quickly in a balanced environment which encouraged independence and growth but was supportive and safe.

Thirdly, I would like to acknowledge all of the administrative, clinical, and research staff of the Royal Adelaide Hospital who have assisted me in conducting my research.
(1) Thank you to A/Prof. Hugh Harley for supporting my research in the Royal Adelaide Hospital Liver Clinic over the last four and a half years. Not only did you give me access to the clinic and your staff to conduct my research, you gave insightful feedback for my manuscripts, and provided generous financial support to allow me to travel to conferences and present this research.

(2) Thank you to Anton Colman, Megan Phelps, and Joanne Morgan for your assistance in collecting data for my honours and PhD research.

Fourthly, I would like to thank a number of other individuals who have made this research possible.

(1) A very special thanks to the research and administrative staff of the School of Psychology for their support and assistance in completing this PhD, including Prof. Ted Nettelbeck, Ms. Carola Sanders, Ms. Kylie Pollitt, Ms. Wanda Prokopiak, Ms. Deidre Simpson, Mrs. Jessica Venning, Ms. Lynda Klopp, and Mrs. Angela Allen.

(2) Thanks to Dr. Nancy Briggs for providing statistical advice for this PhD.

(3) I would also like to thank Dr. Tanya Covic and Prof. Alan Tennant for their assistance in facilitation the conversion of DASS to HADS scores necessary for the analysis in study two (Chapter IV).

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support throughout this PhD. Thanks to Robbe, Tam, Max, Harry. Shoutout to the Turboyz and my
NMHS mates. A very special thanks go to my mother, Helena, for instilling in me the value of education and forcing me to go to University. You have set an inspirational example with your dedication and work ethic – if only I had followed this example!

Last, but certainly not least, thank you to the love of my life, Jennifer. If it weren’t for your love, support, cooked meals, and dragging me out of bed many days, I never would have finished this PhD.