

# HEPATITIS C

Final Report



*Submitted to:*

Health Canada

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>KEY FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
Awareness of Hepatitis C Infection .....	3
Concern.....	5
Transmitting Hepatitis C.....	6
Awareness of Treatment of Hepatitis C.....	8
Fatality .....	10
Information about Hepatitis C.....	11
<b>APPENDIX I – QUESTIONNAIRE .....</b>	<b>13</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

The following report summarizes a general population survey regarding general knowledge and awareness of Hepatitis C infection. The questions test the level of knowledge and concern about the infection, awareness about the transmission and treatment of the infection, and where Canadians are most likely to get information about Hepatitis C.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The survey was posed to 1501 Canadians on the National Angus Reid Poll. Survey data was collected between December 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>. The Survey results are considered accurate to within +/- 2.5 percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty, and is larger for subsets of the total sample. Where significant, differences by demographic segment (age, region, income, education and gender) have been noted.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

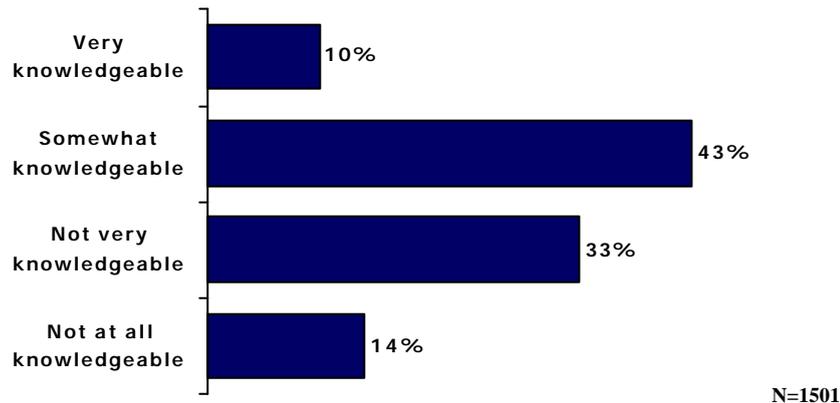
- ◆ A reasonably even split exists between those who believe they are knowledgeable about the Hepatitis C infection and those who believe they are not knowledgeable
  
- ◆ Overall, Canadians are concerned about the Hepatitis C infection
  
- ◆ In general, Canadians have an awareness about the transmission and treatment of the infection
  
- ◆ Canadians who have obtained information about the infection overwhelmingly report that health care professionals provided this information

## Awareness of Hepatitis C Infection

Of those surveyed, only ten percent (10%) consider themselves very knowledgeable about the Hepatitis C infection. Forty three percent (43%), however, report they are somewhat knowledgeable. A full forty-seven (47%) say they are not very (33%) or not at all (14%) knowledgeable. A reasonably even split exists therefore between those who indicate they are knowledgeable (53%) and those with little or no knowledge (47%).

## Awareness of Hepatitis C Infection

*Would you say that you are very knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, not very knowledgeable, or not at all knowledgeable about Hepatitis C infection?*



Those most likely to indicate higher levels of knowledge of Hepatitis C have completed a post secondary diploma or degree and are single with children. Fifty eight percent (58%) of all university graduates surveyed say they are very (13%) or somewhat (45%) knowledgeable, compared with forty two percent (42%) of those with less than a high school education who say they are very (9%) or somewhat (33%) knowledgeable. Sixty five percent (65%) of those single with children report that they are very (9%) or somewhat (56%) knowledgeable compared with forty-nine (49%) of those married or common law who report

they are very (11%) or somewhat (38%) knowledgeable. Age is not a highly significant determinant of level of knowledge, but it is interesting to note that those 35 years and older report a slightly higher level of knowledge than those between 18 and 34. Fifty five percent (55%) of those 35 years and older report they are very (10%) or somewhat (45%) knowledgeable compared with only forty-seven (47%) of those between 18 and 34 who report they are very (10%) or somewhat (37%) knowledgeable.

Those from the Atlantic region report the highest levels of knowledge of the infection, sixty one percent (61%) reporting that they are either very (11%) or somewhat (49%) knowledgeable. Alberta and Québec report the lowest level of knowledge. Forty eight percent (48%) of those from Alberta say they are very (12%) or somewhat (36%) knowledgeable and in Québec forty-nine (49%) say they are very (10%) or somewhat (39%) knowledgeable. Fifty eight percent (58%) of those in British Columbia, fifty four percent (54%) of those in Saskatchewan/Manitoba and fifty two percent (52%) of those in Ontario report they are knowledgeable.

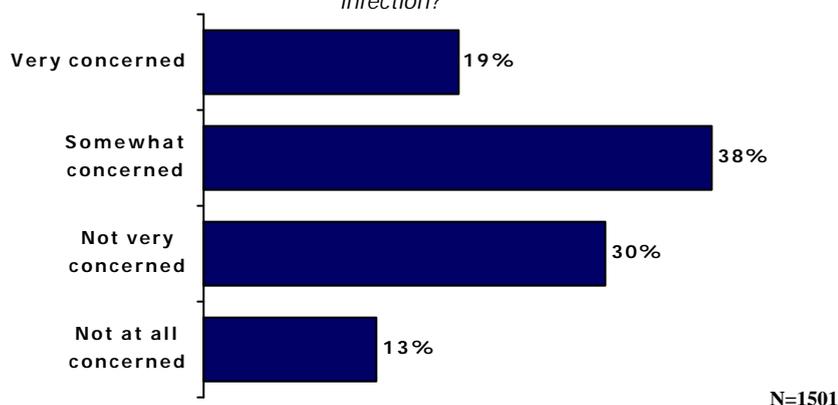
It is interesting to note that those Canadians who report they are knowledgeable also report more concern about the infection. Sixty one percent (61%) of those who are very or somewhat knowledgeable report concern compared to 55% of those who are not very and 46% of those who are not at all knowledgeable.

## Concern

When asked to indicate their level of concern, fifty seven percent (57%) say they are very (19%) or somewhat (38%) concerned. Fewer respondents (43%) indicate they not very (30%) or not at all (13%) concerned.

### Concerns Regarding Hepatitis C Infections

*Regardless of your level of knowledge, would you say that you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned with Hepatitis C infection?*



Most concerned are those who are single with children. Sixty nine percent (69%) say they are very (28%) or somewhat (40%) concerned compared to forty nine percent (49%) of those who are married or common law and without children who say they are concerned.

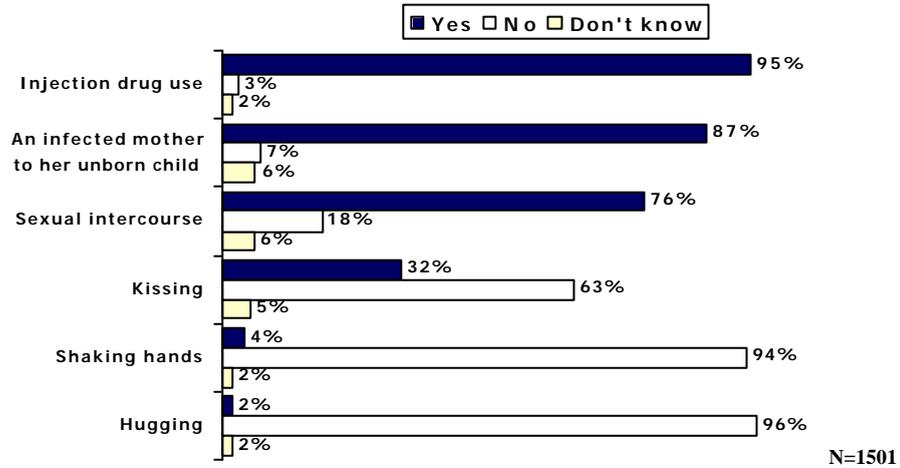
Concern also varies across region. Those in British Columbia and the Atlantic region are the most concerned, sixty five percent (65%) reporting they are very or somewhat concerned, and Québec is the least concerned, with only thirty nine percent (39%) saying they are concerned.

## Transmitting Hepatitis C

When presented with a list of actions that may or may not transmit the Hepatitis C infection, a high percentage of respondents believe the infection is transmitted through injection drug use (95%) and from an infected Mother to her unborn child (87%). A low percentage of respondents believe that the infection is passed through casual contact such as shaking hands (2%) or hugging (2%). Respondents are less sure about sexual intercourse and kissing. Seventy six percent (76%) say sexual intercourse and thirty-two (32%) say kissing can transmit the infection.

## Ways of Transmitting Hepatitis C

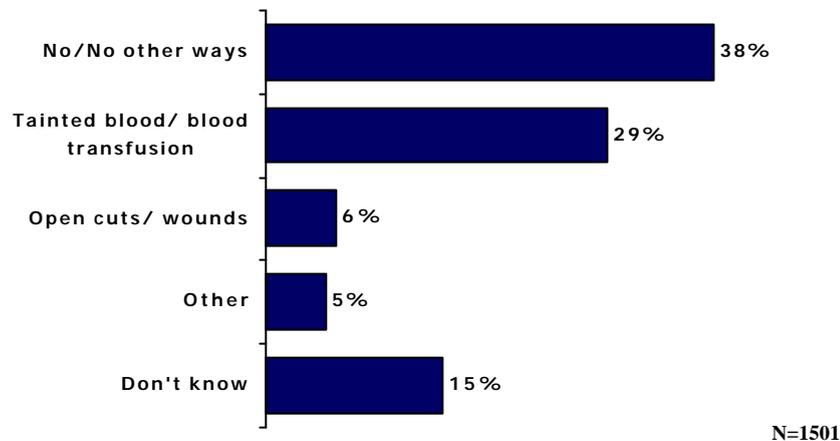
And again, regardless of your level of knowledge, do you think Hepatitis C can be transmitted in any of the following ways:



When asked to think of other ways the infection can be transmitted, thirty eight percent (38%) identify no other way, but twenty nine percent (29%) mention blood transfusion.

## Other Ways of Transmitting Hepatitis C

*And can you think of any other ways that Hepatitis C infection can be transmitted?*



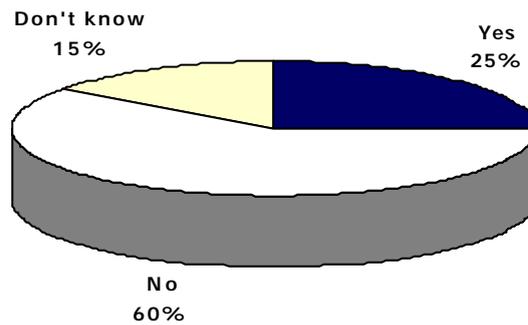
A trend exists to suggest that those with less education (high school or less than high school) are more likely to indicate they don't know. For example, when asked whether kissing can transmit the infection, fifty three percent (53%) of those who haven't completed high school say no compared with seventy percent (70%) of those with a university education.

## Awareness of Treatment of Hepatitis C

When asked if an effective treatment exists for Hepatitis C, sixty percent (60%) say no, twenty percent (25%) say yes and fifteen percent (15%) don't know. Although most Canadians believe an effective cure does not exist, a significant percentage (40%) either don't know or believe there is a cure.

### Awareness of Treatment for Hepatitis C

*In your opinion, does an effective treatment currently exist for Hepatitis C?*

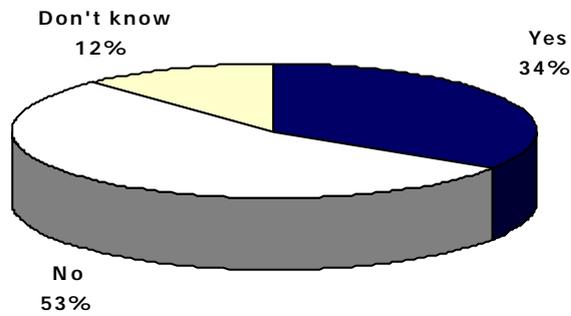


N=1501

When asked about the availability of a vaccine to prevent hepatitis C, fifty three percent (53%) believe no vaccine exists. Forty six percent (46%) believe a vaccine exists (34%) or say they don't know (12%).

## Availability of Vaccine

*Do you believe a vaccine is currently available to prevent Hepatitis C infection?*



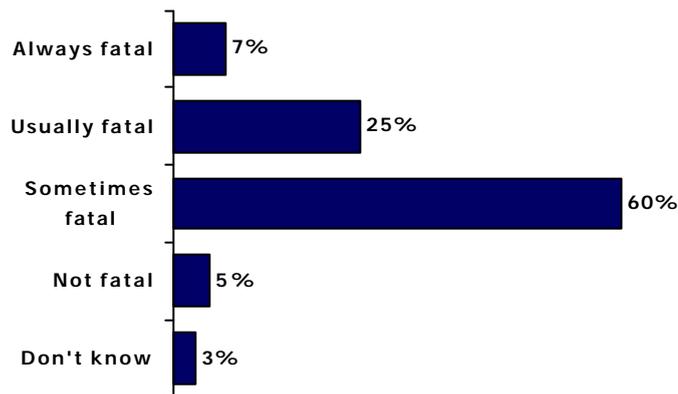
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## Fatality

Asked whether Hepatitis C is fatal, the majority, sixty percent (60%) of respondents, says the infection is sometimes fatal. Another thirty-two (32%) say the infection is usually (25%) or always (7%) fatal. Only five percent (5%) say the infection is not fatal. Only five percent (5%) say the infection is not fatal.

### Hepatitis C Fatal or Not?

*Again, regardless of your level of knowledge, would you say that Hepatitis C infection is always fatal, usually fatal, sometimes fatal, or not fatal?*



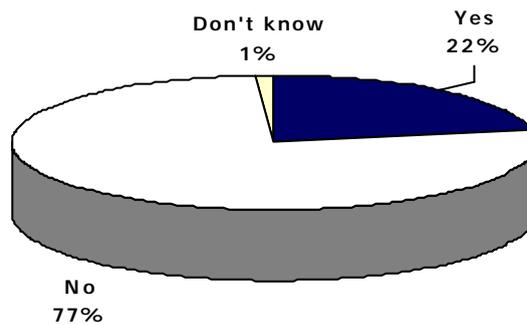
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## Information about Hepatitis C

When asked if they have ever obtained information dealing with the prevention or treatment of Hepatitis C, seventy seven percent (77%), the majority of those surveyed say no. Twenty two percent (22%) say they have obtained information about the infection.

### Information on Hepatitis C

*Regardless of your level of knowledge, have you, yourself, ever obtained information dealing with the prevention and treatment of Hepatitis C?*



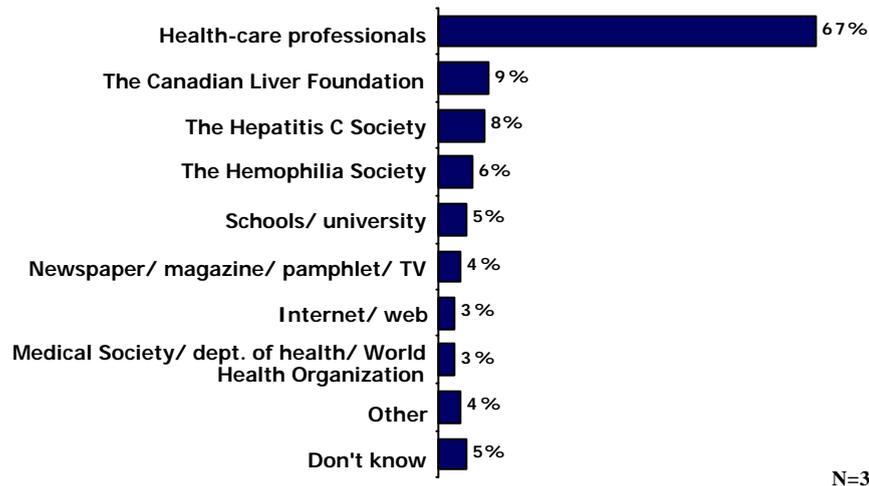
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Those from the Atlantic region are the most likely to have obtained information about the infection, thirty two percent (32%) indicating they had obtained information compared with only fifteen percent (15%) of those from Saskatchewan/Manitoba.

When asked to indicate the source of the information from a list provided in the question, sixty seven percent (67%) of those who had obtained information indicate this information came from health care professionals. The second most common source is the Canadian Liver Foundation, but only nine percent (9%) list this as their source. Eight percent (8%) mention the Hepatitis C society and six percent (6%) the Hemophilia Society.

## Where Did Information Come From?

*And do you recall if the information came from any of the following sources?*



## APPENDIX I – QUESTIONNAIRE

*1. Would you say that you are very knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, not very knowledgeable, or not at all knowledgeable about Hepatitis C infection?*

	TOTAL
BASE (Weighted) : All respondents	1501
BASE (Unweighted): All respondents	1501
Very knowledgeable	10%
Somewhat knowledgeable	43%
Not very knowledgeable	33%
Not at all knowledgeable	14%
Don't know	0
<b>TOPBOX &amp; LOWBOX SUMMARY</b>	
Knowledgeable (Top2Box)	53%
Not Knowledgeable (Low2Box)	47%

*2. Regardless of your level of knowledge, would you say that you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned with Hepatitis C infection?*

	TOTAL
BASE (Weighted) : All respondents	1501
BASE (Unweighted): All respondents	1501
Very concerned	19%
Somewhat concerned	38%
Not very concerned	30%
Not at all concerned	13%
Don't know	0
<b>TOPBOX &amp; LOWBOX SUMMARY</b>	
Concerned (Top2Box)	57%
Not Concerned (Low2Box)	43%

**3a. And again, regardless of your level of knowledge, do you think Hepatitis C can be transmitted in any of the following ways:**

	Yes	No	Don't know
injection drug use	95%	3%	2%
an infected mother to her unborn child	87%	7%	6%
sexual intercourse	76%	18%	6%
kissing	32%	63%	5%
shaking hands	4%	94%	2%
hugging	2%	96%	2%

**3b. And can you think of any other ways that Hepatitis C infection can be transmitted?**

	TOTAL
BASE (Weighted) : All respondents	1501
BASE (Unweighted): All respondents	1501
No/No other ways	38%
Tainted blood/ blood transfusion	29%
Open cuts/ wounds	6%
Other	5%
Body fluids - unspecified	2%
Transfusions (unspecified)	2%
Contaminated food	2%
Sharing food with others	1%
Don't know	15%

**4. In your opinion, does an effective treatment currently exist for Hepatitis C?**

	TOTAL
BASE (Weighted) : All respondents	1501
BASE (Unweighted): All respondents	1501
Yes	25%
No	60%
Don't know	15%

**5. Again, regardless of your level of knowledge, would you say that Hepatitis C infection is always fatal, usually fatal, sometimes fatal, or not fatal?**

	<b>TOTAL</b>
BASE (Weighted) : All respondents	1501
BASE (Unweighted): All respondents	1501
Always fatal	7%
Usually fatal	25%
Sometimes fatal	60%
Not fatal	5%
Don't know	3%

**6. Do you believe a vaccine is currently available to prevent Hepatitis C infection?**

	<b>TOTAL</b>
BASE (Weighted) : All respondents	1501
BASE (Unweighted): All respondents	1501
Yes	34%
No	53%
Don't know	12%

**7. Regardless of your level of knowledge, have you, yourself, ever obtained information dealing with the prevention and treatment of Hepatitis C?**

	<b>TOTAL</b>
BASE (Weighted) : All respondents	1501
BASE (Unweighted): All respondents	1501
Yes	22%
No	77%
Don't know	1%

**8. And do you recall if the information came from any of the following sources?**

<b>TOTAL MENTIONS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
BASE (Weighted) : Obtained information dealing with the prevention and treatment of Hepatitis C	325
BASE (Unweighted): Obtained information dealing with the prevention and treatment of Hepatitis C	321
Health-care professionals	67%
The Canadian Liver Foundation	9%
The Hepatitis C Society	8%
The Hemophilia Society	6%
Schools/ university	5%
Newspaper/ magazine/ pamphlet/ TV	4%
Internet/ web	3%
Medical Society/ dept. of health/ World Health Organization	3%
My employer/ work	2%
Freind/ relative/ word of mouth	2%
CLSC	2%
Nothing	1%
Other	4%
Don't know	5%