

Background

• People who inject drugs (PWID) often experience discrimination when seeking healthcare¹. HCV has become a highly stigmatised condition within the general population and healthcare settings because of its association to injecting drug use.

• Attitudes can influence behaviours² and contact-time between healthcare workers and drug users has been shown to influence prejudice³.

Study Aims

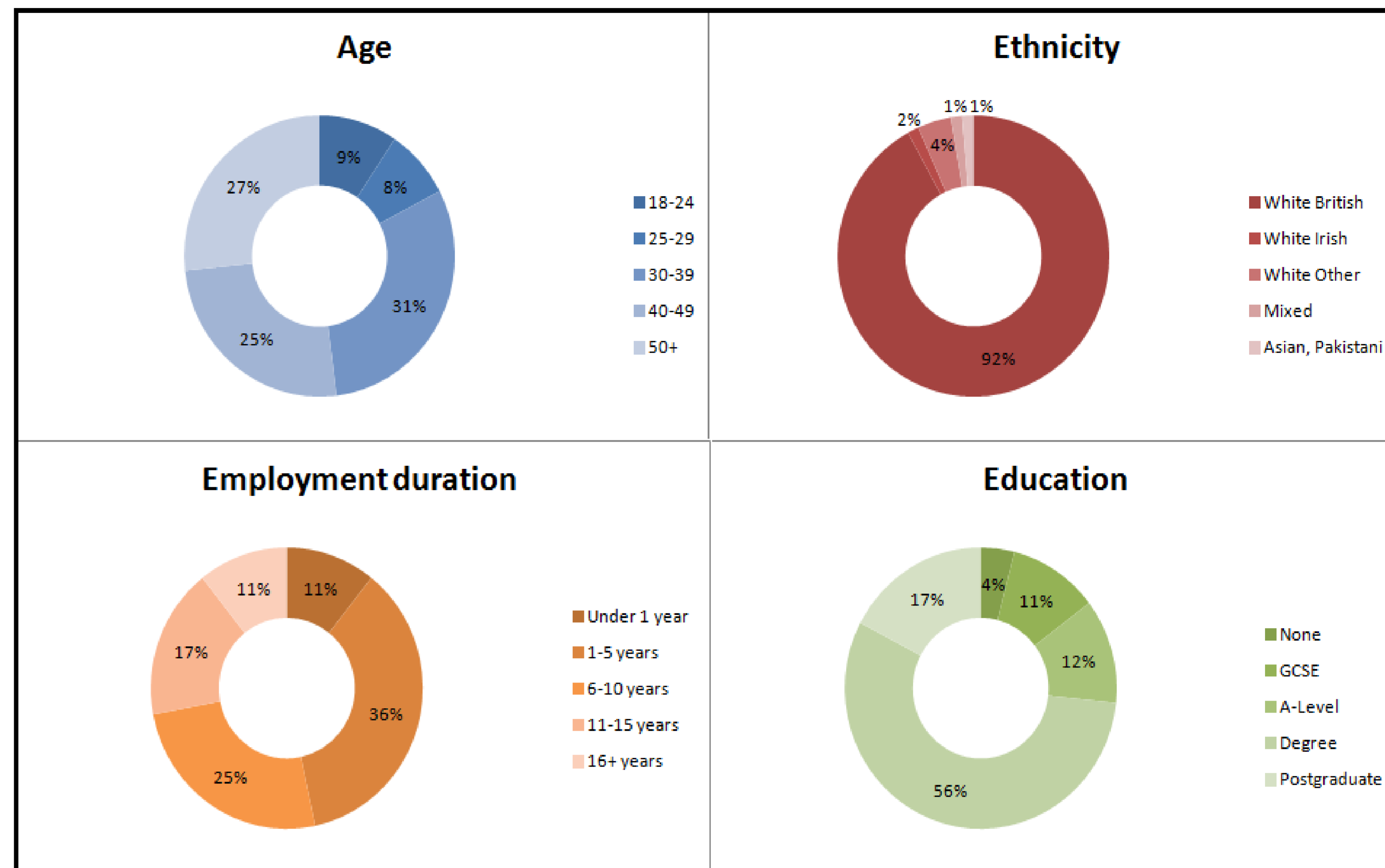
This study compares attitudes towards HCV and PWID in three staff groups working with this population: pharmacy workers; nurses; and support workers.



Picture 1: NHS Staff in clinical setting. Source: NHS Scotland Photo Library

Methods

Graph 1: Demographic Data



The study is a cross-sectional design using an online questionnaire to test attitudes towards HCV, PWID and Perceived Controllability in a sample of healthcare staff volunteers.

A 20-item 5-point Likert scale was adapted from previous research and distributed online via SurveyMonkey.

In total, 75 participants completed the survey: 15 pharmacy staff, 35 nurses and 25 support workers.

Results

A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis H test was run to compare attitudes on all three constructs (hepatitis C, injecting drug use and perceived controllability) between the three staff groups.

Dunn-Bonferroni pairwise comparisons showed which group differed significantly.

Significant differences were detected between:

- Pharmacy staff and Nurses towards PWID
- Pharmacy and Support staff towards perceived controllability

Test results and Effect Sizes

	χ^2	p	Epsilon Squared
Attitudes HCV	$\chi^2(2) = 2.37$.305	.03 (Small)
Attitudes towards PWID	$\chi^2(2) = 6.11$.047	.09 (Small) Nurses-Pharmacy
Perceived Controllability	$\chi^2(2) = 8.10$.017	.12 (Small) Pharmacy-Support W

Discussion

The current findings show positive attitudes towards HCV and PWID among staff.

However, results also suggest all staff groups' knowledge and understanding of this population can vary significantly and some staff might benefit from training on perceived controllability of drug use and behavioural models of addiction.



Picture 2: Methadone dispensed in a community pharmacy. Source: NHS Scotland Photo Library

References

- ¹UKDPC (UK Drug Policy Commission) - Singleton, N. (2011). Getting Serious about Stigma in Scotland: The problem with stigmatising drug users. [Online]
- ²Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behaviour. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* (50): 179-211.
- ³Pettigrew, T. F. And Tropp, L. R. (2006). A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (90): 751-783.

Acknowledgements

With appreciation and thanks to Tayside Substance Misuse Service, CAIR Scotland, Addaction, NHS Tayside Community Pharmacy and the participants who volunteered to take part in this study.