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## Understanding Barriers to Hepatitis C Virus Care and Stigmatization From a Social Perspective

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### Abstract

A large body of literature emphasizes the relationship between stigma and adverse health outcomes and health access measures. For people living with hepatitis C virus (HCV), stigma is a defining feature given the association of HCV with the socially demonized practice of injection drug use. However, there is little literature that specifically examines stigma as a barrier to HCV care and treatment. This review argues that the relationship between the person living with HCV and their health worker can work to ameliorate the effects of stigma. We draw on an emerging literature that examines the positive association between a patient's "trust" in their health worker and outcomes such as increased healthcare utilization and reduced risk behaviors. We investigate a growing body of health services research that acknowledges the importance of stigma and demonstrates ways to build positive, enabling relationships between patient, health worker, and health setting.

**Key words** [hepatitis C](#) [injection drug use](#) [stigma](#) [trust](#) [clinical encounter](#)  
[patient–doctor relationship](#)

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