

# Increases in Hepatitis C Testing Observed in Large Commercial Laboratory Data Sources: Quest Diagnostics and Laboratory Corporation of America, 2011-2017

## Background

- Chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is highly prevalent among people born in the United States during the years 1945 through 1965 (ie, baby boomers). This generational group is 5 times more likely to be infected with HCV than other adults in the United States.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended that all adults born 1945 through 1965 have 1-time testing for chronic HCV infection.<sup>1</sup> The US Preventive Services Task Force followed with a similar recommendation in June of 2013.<sup>2</sup>
- **Objective:** The investigators of this study calculated the rates of HCV antibody testing in years 2011 and 2017 among populations with commercial health insurance coverage; they compared the testing rates among baby boomers and non-baby boomers.

## Methods

- De-identified data of persons with HCV antibody immunoassay tests in 2011 and in 2017 were obtained from 2 nationwide commercial laboratories: Quest Diagnostics and Laboratory Corporation of America® (LabCorp®).
- For each laboratory dataset, rates of HCV antibody testing were calculated as the number of individuals with a first HCV antibody test in a month divided by 100 individuals who had any laboratory test performed in the same month.
  - Annual average HCV testing rates were then calculated for each commercial laboratory dataset and stratified by baby boomers (individuals born 1945-1965) and non-baby boomers (individuals born after 1965).

## Results

- In 2011, before the recommendation of the CDC was introduced, the rate of HCV antibody testing was lower for baby boomers compared to non-baby boomers in either laboratory dataset.
  - Quest Diagnostics: 1.7 vs. 2.3 per 100 individuals
  - LabCorp: 1.7 vs. 2.5 per 100 individuals
- From 2011 to 2017, rates of HCV antibody testing increased among both generational groups. However, rates increased to a greater extent among baby boomers (131%-132%) compared to non-baby boomers (31%-35%).
  - Quest Diagnostics
    - Baby boomers: 1.7 to 3.8 per 100 individuals
    - Non-baby boomers: 2.3 to 3.1 per 100 individuals
  - LabCorp
    - Baby boomers: 1.7 to 4.0 per 100 individuals
    - Non-baby boomers: 2.5 to 3.2 per 100 individuals

## Conclusions

- This study shows that HCV testing increased substantially from 2011 (the year before new HCV screening recommendations were introduced) to 2017, especially among baby boomers.
- Data obtained from commercial laboratories among national population sets are useful for evaluating patterns of HCV testing.

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### Webpage

<https://www.healthsurveillance.org/page/2019LIVEPROGRAM>

### References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Viral hepatitis: People born 1945-1965 (baby boomers). <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/populations/1945-1965.htm>. Accessed January 16, 2019.
2. US Preventive Services Task Force. Hepatitis C: screening. <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Page/Document/UpdateSummaryFinal/hepatitis-c-screening>. Accessed January 16, 2019.