

Appendix

Annex A: Search Strategy

We searched for English language publications with the use of broad search terms: “hepatitis C virus” AND (“child” OR "adolescent") together with (AND) either “epidemiology”, “transmission”, “natural history”, “prevention”, “diagnosis”, or “treatment” from Jan 1st, 2010, to December 31st, 2017. The age limit “birth-18 years” was applied. We included randomised controlled trials, observational studies, retrospective studies, meta-analyses, review articles, editorials, and case reports. Animal studies and in-vitro studies were excluded. We also searched reference lists of articles identified by this strategy and included additional relevant studies. The final list of eligible studies was based on those of direct relevance to the key topics of this review.

Table A. Summary of key studies reporting the natural history of hepatitis C in adolescents and children

Author	n	Duration of follow up, years [mean±SD; median (range)]	Type of study	Region	Route of acquisition	HIV status	Key findings
Garazzino, 2014 ¹	45	NR	prospective	Italy	vertical 100%	negative	26.7% presented spontaneous clearance of HCV; all children were asymptomatic; non-organ-specific autoantibodies were detected in 53.3% and 33.3% presented cryoglobulinemia
Lai, 2013 ²	50	26 (22-30)	prospective	Italy	parenteral 100%	NR	patients with thalassemia major: 44.2% presented spontaneous clearance of HCV; IL-28B genotypes (SNP rs12980275, rs8099917, rs11881222, rs12979860) were significantly different between subjects who cleared the virus and subjects who did not; liver biopsies were performed in 32 patients (13 HCV RNA negative and 19 HCV RNA positive); cirrhosis was found in one HCV RNA-positive patient (17 years after infection); liver iron was associated with fibrosis development
Chen, 2009 ³	42	11.6 ± 4.7	prospective	Taiwan	vertical 18% parenteral 80% unknown 2%	negative	14.3% presented spontaneous clearance of HCV; patients with spontaneous viral clearance had lower mean RNA levels (cut-off value at enrolment of $4.5 \cdot 10^4$ IU/mL achieved 66.7% specificity -, and 80.6% specificity -)
Bortolotti, 2008 ⁴	504	5.9 ± 3.8	prospective	Italy	vertical 57% parenteral 31% unknown 12%	negative	7.5% presented spontaneous clearance of HCV (independently predicted by HCV genotype 3); 1.8% of the patients with persistent viraemia progressed to decompensated cirrhosis (mean age, 9.6 years)
Mohan, 2007 ⁵	60	3.3 ± 1.7	prospective	US	vertical 13% parenteral 68% unknown 19%	3%	25% had normal ALT, 62% had ALT values one to three times the ULN and 13% greater than three times the ULN ; 42 patients underwent liver biopsy: 71% had minimal to mild inflammation, 88% absent or minimal fibrosis in and 12% bridging fibrosis; age at infection and serum gamma-glutamyltranspeptidase correlated with fibrosis; serum alanine aminotransferase correlated with inflammation; four patients underwent repeat biopsies within 1 to 4 years with no significant progression in three and cirrhosis in one
European Pediatric HCV, 2005 ⁶	266	4.2 (0.3-15.9)	prospective	Europe	vertical 100%	26	hepatomegaly was the only clinical sign reported (10%); ~50% of the children presented chronic asymptomatic infection (intermittent viremia, normal ALT levels, rare hepatomegaly); ~30% presented chronic, active infection (persistent viremia, frequent abnormal ALT levels, and hepatomegaly in some cases)
Resti, 2003 ⁷	62	2 (2-11)	prospective	Europe	vertical 100%	negative	19% presented spontaneous clearance of HCV within 30 months of life; among those presenting spontaneous clearance 66% developed an ALT peak greater than 5 times the ULN at onset (versus 28% of children with persistent viremia; $P < 0.05$), 50% had HCV genotype 3 (versus 17% of viremic children); hepatomegaly was the only clinical sign reported in 10% of children; 11 patients underwent liver biopsy and liver disease was mild in all
Tovo, 2000 ⁸	104	4 (0.5-12.7)	prospective	Europe	vertical 100%	negative	chronic infection was asymptomatic in all but 2 children who developed hepatomegaly; mean ALT concentrations decreased

							substantially after the first two years of life; 20 patients underwent liver biopsy that showed signs of minimal to moderate inflammation
Stallings-Smiths, 2015 ⁹	113	30 (28-36)	retrospective/prospective	US	parenteral 100%	0-8%	paediatric cancer survivors; cumulative incidence of cirrhosis increased at each 10-year interval from 0% after 10 years to 13% after 40 years (p trend<0.001); median age at diagnosis of cirrhosis was 30 years (interquartile range=24-38); a linear trend in incidence was observed for males (P trend<0.001), with a cumulative incidence of 18% after 40 years (versus female 6.5%)
Mizuochi, 2017 ¹⁰	348	NR	retrospective/prospective	Japan		negative	9% presented spontaneous clearance of HCV; 147 children underwent liver biopsy that showed no or mild fibrosis in 91% and bridging fibrosis in 9%; none had cirrhosis
Modin, 2018 ¹¹	1049	NR	retrospective	UK	injecting drug use in adolescents 53% infected blood products 24% vertical 11% unknown 11%	4%	32% of developed cirrhosis at a median of 33 years from exposure irrespective of mode of infection; risk factors for development of cirrhosis were male gender and heavy alcohol use; patients with vertical infection developed cirrhosis earlier at a median age of 36yrs (range 17-53yrs) compared to 48yrs (range 33-68yrs), 46yrs (range 12-61yrs), and 51.5yrs (range 12-65yrs) in the intravenous drug use, blood, and unknown groups, respectively (p<0.001). Hepatocellular carcinoma was in 5%, liver transplant in 4% and death in 3%
Abdel-Hady, 2011 ¹²	133	NR	retrospective	UK	vertical 49% parenteral 51%	NR	17.5% presented spontaneous clearance of HCV; 66 children underwent liver biopsy at diagnosis: 46% showed no evidence of fibrosis (median age at the time of the biopsy 6.3 years), 50% mild fibrosis and 4% moderate to severe fibrosis (median age at the time of the biopsy 10.1 years); none had cirrhosis; fibrosis score was related to older age at the time of biopsy (p = 0.02) and longer duration of infection (p = 0.05)
Delgado-Borrego, 2010 ¹³	102	NR	retrospective	US	NR	negative	102 children underwent liver biopsy; 23.5% showed fibrosis stages 3 and 4
Rumbo, 2006 ¹⁴	91	NR	retrospective	US	vertical 58% parenteral 22% unknown 20%	negative	35 patients underwent liver biopsy; 7.7% of the patients had cirrhosis at presentation (mean age, 11.7 years); stage 3 or 4 fibrosis was more common in patients with abnormal ALT (33.3%) compared with those with normal or near normal ALT (0; p 0.05); four patients (4.4%) underwent liver transplantation, all experienced HCV recurrence, 2 died, 1 was re-transplanted, and 1 has compensated cirrhosis
Iorio, 2005 ¹⁵	125	9 (3.4-20.9)	retrospective	Italy	vertical 43% parenteral 43% unknown 14%	NR	7.2% presented spontaneous clearance of HCV; 100% of the patients were asymptomatic; 80% of the patients had detectable HCV RNA and abnormal ALT, 12.8% had detectable HCV RNA and normal ALT; 64 patients underwent liver biopsy; histological lesions were mild in all; no linear correlation was found between duration of disease and progression of fibrosis; examination of a follow-up liver biopsy specimen revealed cirrhosis only in 1 (4.7%) of 21 children.
Rerksupphol, 2004 ¹⁶	31	NR	retrospective	Australia	vertical 100%	negative	19% presented spontaneous clearance of HCV; 100% of the patients were asymptomatic; 4 patients underwent liver biopsy that revealed mild to moderate fibrosis and/or necroinflammatory activity, but no cirrhosis
Casiraghi, 2004 ¹⁷	31	NR*	retrospective	Italy	parenteral 100%	negative	blood transfusion recipients; 56.2% had normal ALT levels; 31.3% <1.5 the upper normal limit, 12.5% > 1.5 the upper normal limit; 11 patients underwent liver biopsy: 81.8% had no fibrosis or mild portal

							fibrosis and 18.2% had discrete or marked fibrosis; five patients underwent repeat biopsies at a five years interval that revealed no substantial modifications in four cases and progression from absence of fibrosis to mild portal fibrosis in the fifth
Jara, 2003 ¹⁸	224	6.2 ± 4.7	retrospective	Europe	vertical 45% parenteral 44% unknown 6% other 5%	negative	6% presented spontaneous clearance of HCV; 87% were asymptomatic; 48% had ALT levels < or =2 times the upper limit of normal; 92 patients underwent liver biopsy: the mean fibrosis score (+/-SD) was 1.5+/-1.3 for children <15 years of age and 2.3+/-1.2 for children > or =15 years of age (range, 0-6 years; P<.01).

Legend: SD, standard deviation; HIV, human immunodeficiency virus; NR, not reported; IL, interleukin; SNP, single nucleotide polymorphism; ALT, alanine aminotransferase; ULN, upper limit of normal; * 31 individuals given mini transfusions of HCV-infected blood as newborn infants were enrolled 30 years later

Table B. Summary of completed clinical trials of direct-acting antivirals regimens for hepatitis C virus infected, treatment-naïve and –experienced adolescents (aged 12 to 17 years) and children (aged less than 12 years)

Drugs (ClinicalTrials.gov Identifier)	HCV genotypes	Study design	Ages (years)	n	Countries	Dose and duration	PK Data	SVR12	Other endpoint results	Published reference
sofosbuvir + ribavirin (NC02175758)	2, 3	Non-randomized, open label, interventional, phase III trial in treatment-naïve and –experienced (PEG IFN and ribavirin) HCV-infected, with or without compensated cirrhosis	12-17	52 GT2: 13 (25%); GT3: 39 (75%)	US, Australia, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Russia, UK	sofosbuvir 400mg daily; ribavirin 15mg/kg/day up to 1,400mg/day, in 2 divided doses; GT2: 12 weeks GT3: 24 weeks	Comparable plasma exposures of sofosbuvir to those observed in adults	51 (98%) GT2 13 (100%) GT3 12 (97%) 1 LTFU after achieving SVR4	Drugs well tolerated nausea 14 (27%) headache 12 (23%) asthenia 6 (12%)	¹⁹
			3-12	50	US	sofosbuvir 200mg daily ribavirin 15mg/kg/day up to 1,400mg/day, in 2 divided doses; GT2: 12 weeks GT3: 24 weeks	Comparable plasma exposures of sofosbuvir to those observed in adults	6-12 yrs: 39 (100%); 3-<6 years: 12 (92%) A 4-year old patient discontinued treatment after 3 days due to vomiting and abnormal drug taste	Drugs well tolerated vomiting and fatigue reported in ≥10% of patients	^{20,22}
ledipasvir/sofosbuvir (fixed dose combination) (NCT02249182)	1	Non-randomized, open label, interventional, phase III trial in treatment-naïve and –experienced (PEG IFN and ribavirin) HCV-infected, with or without compensated cirrhosis	12-17	100	US, Australia, UK	ledipasvir/sofosbuvir 90mg/400mg daily; GT1: 12 weeks	Comparable plasma exposures of sofosbuvir, GS-331007, and ledipasvir to those observed in adults	98 (98%) 2 LTFU	Drugs well tolerated headache 27 (27%) diarrhea 14 (14%) fatigue 13 (13%)	²³
	1,3,4		6-11	90		ledipasvir/sofosbuvir 45mg/200mg daily; GT1 and 4: 12 weeks GT1 treatment-experienced with	Comparable plasma exposures of sofosbuvir and ledipasvir to those observed in adults	89 (99%)	headache 27 (27%) fever 15 (17%) abdominal pain 6 (12%)	^{22,24}

						cirrhosis and GT3: 24 weeks				
	1,4		3-5	34		ledipasvir/sofosbuvir 45mg/200mg daily if >17 Kg; 33.75 mg/150mg daily if <17 Kg; GT1 and 4: 12 weeks	Comparable plasma exposures of sofosbuvir and ledipasvir to those observed in adults	33 (97%)	Vomiting, pyrexia, cough, rhinorrhea, streptococcal pharyngitis (>10%)	^{21,25}
ombitasvir-paritaprevir-ritonavir ± dasabuvir ± ribavirin (NCT02486406)	1,4	Non-randomized, open label, interventional, phase III trial in treatment-naïve and – experienced (PEG IFN and ribavirin) HCV-infected, with or without compensated cirrhosis	12-17	38	US, Germany, UK	ombitasvir-paritaprevir-ritonavir 150/100/25 mg dasabuvir 250 mg twice daily ribavirin 15mg/kg/day up to 1,400mg/day, in 2 divided doses	Comparable plasma exposures of sofosbuvir and ledipasvir to those observed in adults	38 (100%)	Drugs well tolerated headache 8 (21%) fatigue 7 (18%) nasopharyngitis 5 (13%)	²⁶
ledipasvir/sofosbuvir (fixed dose combination)	4	Non-randomized, open label, interventional, phase III trial in treatment-naïve and – experienced (PEG IFN and ribavirin) HCV-infected, with or without compensated cirrhosis	12-17	144	Egypt	ledipasvir/sofosbuvir 90mg/400mg daily; GT4: 12 weeks	Not available	142 (99%)	Drugs well tolerated headache 29 (20%) diarrhea 17 (12%) pruritus 16 (11%)	²⁷
ledipasvir/sofosbuvir (fixed dose combination)	4	Non-randomized, open label, interventional, phase III trial in treatment-naïve and – experienced (PEG IFN and ribavirin) HCV-infected, with or without compensated cirrhosis	12-17	40	Egypt	ledipasvir/sofosbuvir 90mg/400mg daily; GT4: 12 weeks	Not available	39 (97.5%)	Drugs well tolerated asthenia 21 (52.5%) headache 19 (47.5%) diarrhea 17 (12%) irritability 13 (32.5%)	²⁸
ledipasvir/sofosbuvir (fixed dose combination)	4	Non-randomized, open label, interventional, phase III trial in treatment-naïve and – experienced (PEG IFN and ribavirin) HCV-infected, without cirrhosis	6-11	20	Egypt	ledipasvir/sofosbuvir 45mg/200mg daily; GT4: 12 weeks	Not available	19 (95%)	Drugs well tolerated, no side effect was reported	²⁹

sofosbuvir + daclatasvir	4	Non-randomized, open label, interventional, phase III trial in treatment-naïve patients HCV-infected, without cirrhosis	12-17	10	Egypt	sofosbuvir 400 mg daily daclatasvir 60 mg	Not available	10 (100%)	Drugs well tolerated nausea 3 (30%) abdominal pain 3 (30%) fatigue 2 (20%)	³⁰
sofosbuvir + daclatasvir	4	Non-randomized, open label, interventional, phase III trial in treatment-naïve and – experienced (PEG IFN and ribavirin) HCV-infected, without cirrhosis	12-17	30	Egypt	sofosbuvir 400 mg daily daclatasvir 60 mg	Not available	29 (96.7%)	Drugs well tolerated fatigue 4 (13.3%) nausea 3 (10%) abdominal pain 3 (10%)	³¹
glecaprevir/pibrentasvir (DORA Study)	1-6	Non-randomized, open label, phase III trial in treatment-naïve and experienced HCV-infected, without cirrhosis	12-17	47	US, Canada, Japan, Germany, Spain, Puerto Rico, Russia, UK, Belgium	G/P (300 mg/120 mg) with food once daily for 8 or 16 (GT 3) weeks	Steady-state exposures in adolescents were within range of those observed in adults	47 (100%)	Drugs well-tolerated No treatment discontinuations or serious AEs Safety profile in adolescents consistent with that in adults	³²

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