

# Dramatic reduction in Hepatitis C related Hepatomas in Ireland 2015-2020

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## INTRODUCTION

Hepatitis C is a major cause of morbidity and mortality world wide. Since 2015 very effective curative treatment in the form of direct acting antivirals (DAA) have become widely available. There has been a major push both nationally with the 'National Hepatitis C Treatment Programme' and internationally with the 'WHO global health strategy on viral hepatitis 2016–2021' to make the identification, treatment and eradication of Hepatitis C a public health priority.

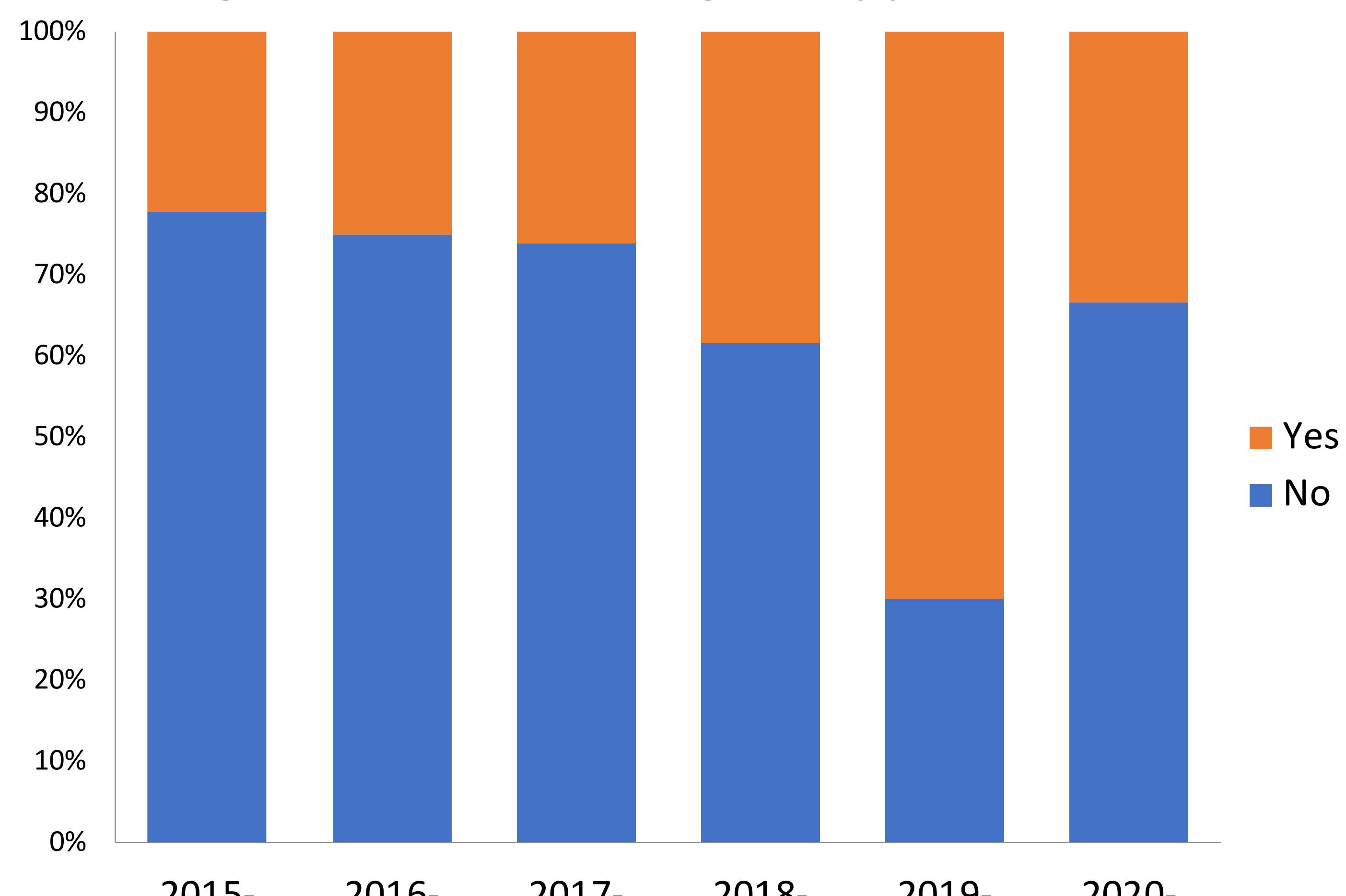
Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) is a major cause of death from Hepatitis C. SVUH has become the *de facto* national center for the diagnosis and treatment of HCC.

The aim of this study was to see if the incidence of Hepatitis C related HCC has decreased over this period (2015-2020). We analysed the HCV cohort attending the HCC clinic and its change overtime associated with advances in HCV treatment.

## METHODS

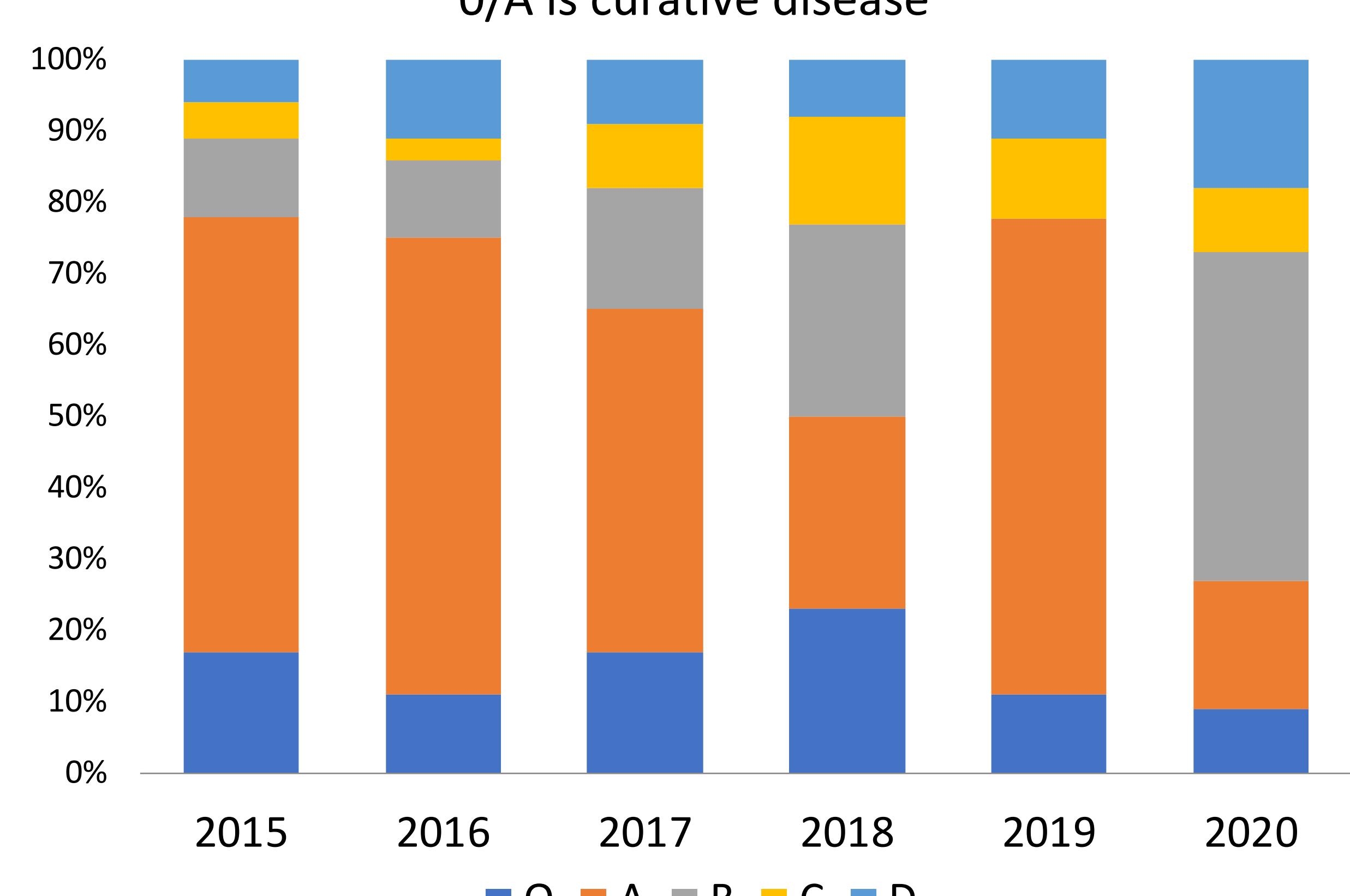
We retrospectively reviewed data from HCC clinic. Patient demographics, underlying liver disease and aetiology, risk factors, stage at diagnosis and achievement of SVR were analysed.

**Figure 2: SVR at time of diagnosis by year 2015-2020**



**Figure 3: BCLC stage at Diagnosis**

0/A is curative disease



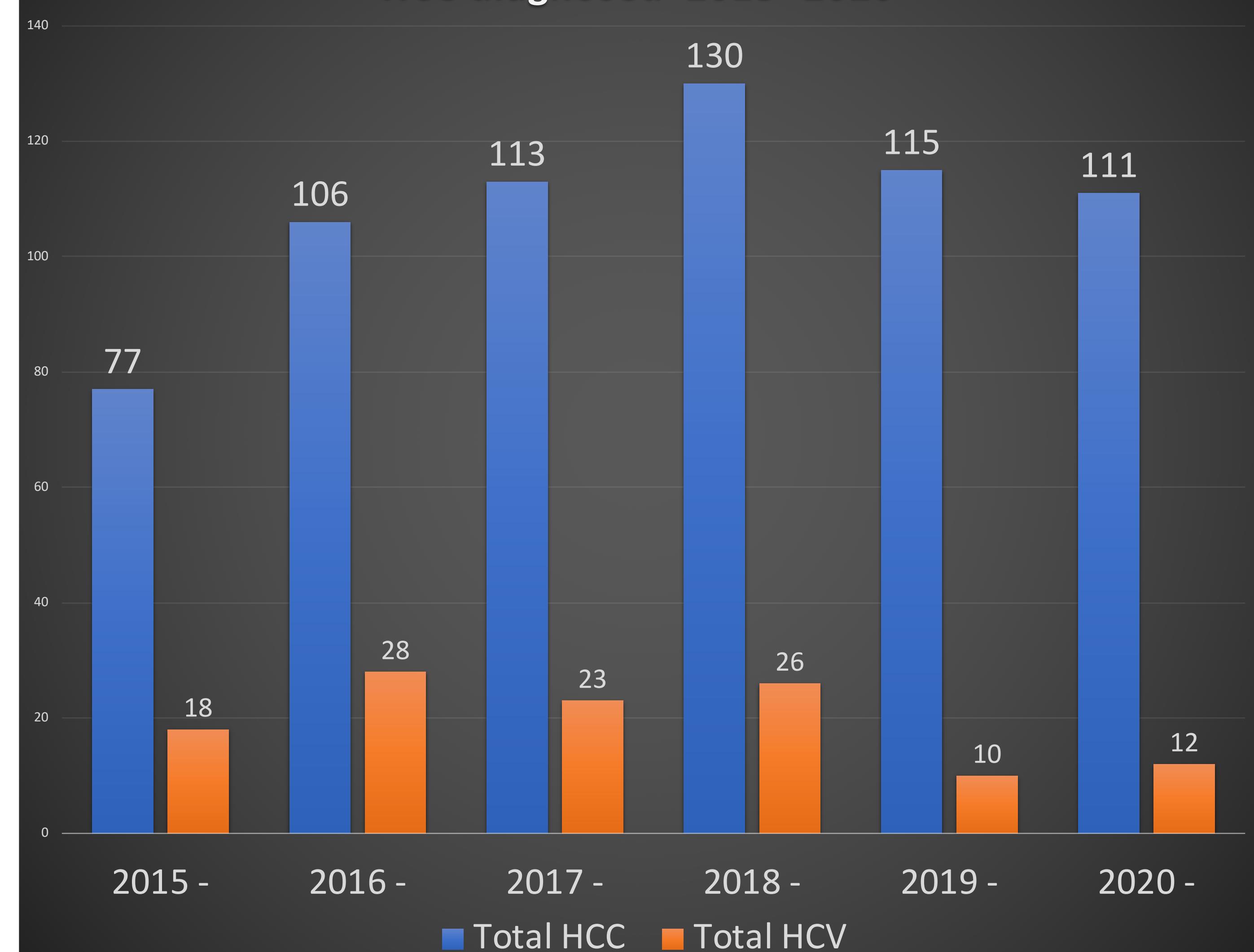
## RESULTS

From 2015-2020 633 patients presented with HCC, 19% (n=117) had Hepatitis C related disease. Of these the median age was 59 year, 80% (n=94) were male, 30% (n=34) had additional risk factors for liver disease, 66% (n=79) had not achieved SVR at diagnosis, 68% (n=73) presented with curative disease (BCLC 0/A).

In 2015 23% (n=18) of patients who presented had HCC related to Hepatitis C, this decreased to 9% (n=10) in 2019 and 11% (n=12) in 2020. This amounts to a 33% reduction in hepatitis C related HCC ( $P=0.016$ ). This is in line with the WHO's goal to reduce Hepatitis C related mortality by 10% by 2020.

In 2020 only 33% of patients presented with curative disease. Likely COVID related. In 2020 66% of patients who presented with untreated for Hepatitis C at time of HCC diagnosis.

**Figure 1: Hepatitis C related HCC relative to total HCC diagnosed 2015- 2020**



## CONCLUSIONS

There has been a reduction in the absolute numbers of patients with Hepatitis C related HCC and in the proportion of patients with HCC related to Hepatitis C. This suggests antiviral treatment is having a significant beneficial effect on prognosis.

The national and international push to identify, cure and eradicate Hepatitis C infection is showing tangible results in Ireland. Much more work still needs to be done to diagnose and treat Hepatitis C prior to presenting with HCC.