Hepatitis C Genotypes

- Genotype is the term used to describe the specific genetic structure of hepatitis C subtypes.
- Ten different hepatitis C genotypes have been identified however the current tests can only identify six.
- They are all closely related in their genetic make-up but differ enough that scientists have classified them into distinct groups.
- The major genotypes (1-10) have been further divided into subtypes (1a, 1b,2a,2b,etc).
- Genotypes appear to be geographically localized, for example 1, 2, and 3 are widely distributed in Western countries and genotype 4 is found predominantly in the Middle East and Central Africa.
- In Australia the predominant genotypes are genotype 1 (55% of notified infections) and genotype 3 (35% of infections).
- Genotyping plays an important role in the decision making process about whether to undergo treatment and the duration of therapy as genotypes predict treatment responsiveness.