

## HEPATITIS B COMMUNITY OUTREACH TESTING – SUCCESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

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**Background/Approach:** The Hepatitis B (HBV) Community Outreach Testing project is an ongoing collaborative initiative between the HIV and Related Programs (HARP) Unit and the Department of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, St George Hospital, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD). The project aims: to increase awareness and understanding of chronic hepatitis B (CHB) among culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, to increase access to HBV testing and liver FibroScan and to link those diagnosed with CHB with care.

**Analysis/Argument:** People from CALD backgrounds are a priority population identified in the *NSW Hepatitis B Strategy 2014-2020*. SESLHD is home to around 10,100 people living with CHB. The majority (over 70%) were born overseas. People from countries with elevated HBV prevalence are at increased risk of chronic infection, may have limited awareness of viral hepatitis and its implications as well as a reluctance to present for health care due to difficulties navigating the system and/or concerns around stigma.

**Outcome/Results:** In 2018 the program delivered 8 education and testing sessions. The sessions were predominantly targeted to the Chinese communities living in the St George area. In total, 166 people were screened. Eight active HBV infections (5%) were detected. Seventy-six people (50%) were found out to have past exposure to HBV. Evaluation surveys revealed that participants felt that offering HBV tests on site was helpful and they felt comfortable being tested.

**Conclusions/Applications:** The outreach project was well received by the community. The provision of HBV information in community languages was proven to be effective in increasing awareness and understanding of CHB as well as encouraging the community to get tested. The availability of on-site HBV tests has allowed the community easier access to HBV testing and FibroScan.

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