

## TALKING TESTING IN PREGNANCY: IMPROVING MIDWIVES' SKILLS IN HIV AND HEPATITIS TESTING

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**Background/Purpose:** Midwives play a critical role in ensuring that HIV and hepatitis screening occurs during early pregnancy, in accordance with national consensus guidelines and policies. Limited opportunities exist for midwives to gain the knowledge, skills and confidence required to initiate testing discussions at the first antenatal visit.

**Approach:** La Trobe University in collaboration with Mercy Health developed a workforce education intervention to build midwives' capacity to initiate testing for HIV and hepatitis. Participants were sent pre learning summary documents and video demonstrations prior to attending a study day covering clinical, epidemiological and psychosocial aspects of HIV and hepatitis testing and diagnosis in early pregnancy. 69 midwives from metropolitan and regional hospitals participated in the evaluation of the immediate and longer-term impact of the intervention.

**Outcomes/Impact:** Midwives' knowledge of HIV and hepatitis, and confidence in their antenatal testing practice both increased following the intervention. Of the 71 participating midwives, 55 completed the pre-intervention survey, 69 post-intervention and 22 completed the three-month evaluation. Results demonstrated improvement across all eight knowledge items. The proportion of respondents who correctly answered all knowledge questions increased from 3.6% pre-intervention to 30.4% upon completion. Nineteen percent felt 'mostly' or 'very' confident before the intervention, increasing to 74% post-intervention. At three months, confidence remained high, with 77% indicating they were 'mostly' or 'very' confident initiating.

**Innovation and Significance:** Midwives' HIV and hepatitis testing knowledge and confidence increased as a result of participation in this workforce education intervention. Our findings demonstrate that short educational interventions result in longer-term improvements in clinical practice which are crucial to ensuring women and their partners are given adequate information and recommendations in regard to screening for HIV and during pregnancy.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

None to disclose.