

Drug use harm reduction messages delivered in colourful, graphical, fit pack stickers and comics for people living with hepatitis C.

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Background/Approach: Drug use does not occur in a vacuum, there are social determinants and a myriad of reasons why people use drugs. Therefore, there is no one type of drug user. Health messaging needs to be inclusive to people from all walks of life, and all literacy levels. Evidence has shown that imagery and plain English are beneficial in delivering health messages. People who live with hepatitis C are often represented in the cohort of people who inject drugs and are therefore ideal candidates for health messaging.

Analysis/Argument: A series of web comics and fit pack stickers were developed to deliver simple graphical messages to people who use drugs as a harm reduction strategy. Each sticker contains a message from LiverWELL's healthy living domains: Eating Well, Feeling Well, Drink Aware, Getting Active, and Living with hepatitis C linked by a QR code to a matching web comic.

The comics feature a cartoon liver, O'Liver; LiverWELL's mascot, as a neutral, gender non-specific character to portray the drug user. O'Liver was chosen to appeal to as broad an audience as possible, as well as being a non-threatening, non-judgemental character.

The health messages were tailored specifically for people who use drugs and were living with or at risk of viral hepatitis and developed in consultation with people who use drugs.

Outcome/Results: The stickers have been delivered to several needle and syringe providers (NSP) throughout Victoria and have received a positive response both from people who use drugs and the NSPs.

Conclusions/Applications: The fun, novel nature of stickers is a positive way to deliver health messages and distribute them to a wide and varied audience. The health messages were inclusive, non-judgemental, and the medium accessible. Even without the QR code interaction, the stickers provide a standalone health message.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

LiverWELL recognises the considerable contribution that industry partners and volunteers make to professional and research activities. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.