

MULTIPLE APPROACHES TO AWARENESS ON VIRAL HEPATITIS B AND THE AVAILABILITY OF FREE VACCINE AMONG THE CAMBODIAN COMMUNITY IN SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE

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Background/Approach: The Hepatitis B Community Mobilisation Project at Hepatitis Victoria aims to raise hepatitis B awareness and demand for state-funded *free vaccine* among people born in priority countries including Cambodia. This project responds to an alarming prevalence of chronic hepatitis B in the Cambodian community at the City of Greater Dandenong in South East Melbourne. A report by MacLachlan and Cowie (2018) indicates that 9.2% of 33,149 Cambodia-born Australians have Chronic Hepatitis B. The majority (48%) of them are living in Victoria, especially in the City of Greater Dandenong.

The project is in its mid-term timeline with fundamental overlapping approaches. The first is to engage community volunteers and associations of religious groups to access community people through public or religious events. Using community social media to increase awareness of the issue is the second approach. The third is to work with Khmer speaking GPs and pharmacists to get access to Cambodians. The fourth is to produce Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials and video messages.

Analysis/Argument: We argue that multiple approaches are needed to address hepatitis in a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse community. The project collaborates with community associations, religious leaders, social media, Khmer speaking GPs and pharmacists to raise awareness about hepatitis B by using IEC materials. Through a community Facebook page, the project can reach the community through creative video messages.

Outcome/Results: Through volunteers, this project reached out many Cambodians through some activities, such as Clean-up Australia Day, an SBS radio program, a Cambodian singing contest, the Asian 2019 Lunar New Year festival, a Khmer New Year event, and informal chats with peers. More community engagements are planned until the end of the project.

Conclusions/Applications: Multiple approaches, especially through local volunteers, allow the project to increase awareness of the community on Hepatitis B.

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