

Hepatitis B Education and the Australian Migrant English Program (AMEP)

Authors:

Alain Arvin Palines¹

¹LiverWELL incorporating Hepatitis Victoria

Background/Approach: Large number of new cases of chronic hepatitis B (CHB) infections are people migrating from hepatitis B endemic areas, especially Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia. This poses great challenges to relevant stakeholders in responding to the needs of priority populations in getting tested, vaccinated, and treated. Therefore, as AMEP students constitute many hepatitis B endemic populations, LiverWELL conducts adapted hepatitis B education sessions to and develops resources for AMEP students to raise awareness and to promote health-seeking behaviour.

Analysis/Argument: With 63% of the Australia's CHB burden represented by people born overseas, collaboration with AMEP institutions provides greater opportunities for community engagement. Employing AMEP-oriented hepatitis B education sessions allows opportunities for AMEP students to immerse themselves in the Australian healthcare system and to gain relevant knowledge and tools in seeking hepatitis B testing, vaccination, and treatment.

Outcome/Results: Participants' knowledge of hepatitis B increased significantly, and health-seeking attitudes shifted positively. Pre and posttests reveal increases in hepatitis B knowledge of approximately 32%. While only 35% of participants had never talked about hepatitis B with their doctor, an estimated 80% reported that they would to their doctor about hepatitis B after the session. Approximately 77% of participants reported that they would get a hepatitis B test after the session. Lastly, with approximately 61% of participants who haven't been or unsure of being vaccinated, 63% reported getting vaccinated in the future.

Conclusions/Applications: AMEP hepatitis B education is an effective approach to connect with diverse multicultural communities, thus increasing their health literacy. It enables students to apply learnings and discuss health concerns and beliefs, culture, and stigma within a safe environment. AMEP hepatitis B education sessions also is a unique method in responding to the lack of translated resources and health-related stigma through incorporating creative hepatitis B messaging in the English course curriculum and within students' lives.

Disclosure of Interest: None