

HEPATITIS B POP-UP SCREENING AT UNSW - WAS IT ALL WORTH IT?

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Background/Approach: A partnership was established between SESLHD HARP Unit, Hepatitis NSW and several student facing UNSW organisations. The partnership held an on-campus “Liver Health Check” stall, with the objective of raising the awareness of hepatitis B (HBV), reducing stigma and encouraging testing. Fibroscans and HBV screening for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students were offered, alongside a range of educational engagement activities.

Analysis/Argument: People from CALD backgrounds are a priority population identified in the *NSW Hepatitis B Strategy 2014-2020*. People from countries with elevated HBV prevalence are at increased risk of chronic infection but may have limited awareness of viral hepatitis and its implications. Reluctance to attend health care services is common due to limited health literacy, difficulties navigating health services and concerns around stigma. With over 20,000 international students studying at UNSW, many of whom from China (70%) the university presents a unique opportunity to target young people from at risk countries.

Outcome/Results: Within a 5-hour period, 93 students (93% from CALD backgrounds) were screened for viral hepatitis and 41 of these students undertook a Fibroscan. One active HBV infection was detected; a total of 35 students were identified as susceptible to either hepatitis A, HBV or both; and a further 14 students returned abnormal liver function tests. All students were referred to the UNSW Health Service to receive their results.

Conclusions/Applications: This partnership successfully delivered viral hepatitis screening to a large number of CALD university students. Provision of testing both free of charge and on-campus were key factors in students’ willingness to undertake testing; as was the credibility afforded to the event through the endorsement of student organisations already familiar to and trusted by international students. Many participants were linked into the Health Service for the first time, providing opportunities for additional health education and interventions while living in Australia.

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