

## ADDRESSING STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH HEPATITIS B AMONG CHINESE AND KOREAN AUSTRALIANS: FAMILY HEALTH AND CANCER PREVENTION

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**Background:** In 2016 an estimated 237,894 people in Australia were living with chronic hepatitis B (CHB), of whom 61% were born overseas, most commonly in the Asia-Pacific region. Hepatitis NSW bilingual educators work with Chinese and Korean communities to raise awareness, encourage screening, monitoring and treatment of hepatitis B.

People living with CHB in mainland China and Korea experience significant discrimination, largely attributed to misunderstandings about transmission, with most people regarding HBV as highly contagious and fatal. Common misperceptions such as that hepatitis B can be transmitted by sharing drinking glasses, cooking utensils and food, or sharing toothbrushes highlight lack of awareness.

**Argument:** Research has demonstrated that people in China lack initiative to undergo screening possibly due to fear. To foster demand for testing and treatment and to help reach national testing and treatment targets we have approached hepatitis B education as a family health and cancer prevention issue, which now aligns with the Third National Hepatitis B Strategy.

Chinese and Korean communities care deeply about their health and the health of their families. Adopting a family health and cancer prevention strategy and conducting hepatitis B education in partnership with community organisations provides a holistic health approach, reduces stigma associated with CHB, and fosters interest and participation.

**Results:** From July 2018 to March 2019, 1,020 Chinese and Korean Australians have received information and education sessions covering hepatitis B, transmission, vaccination, harm reduction, monitoring and treatment. Over 90% of participants would consider undergoing testing and/or recommend their family members do so.

**Conclusions:** Health promotion events with broad appeal strengthen the opportunity to deliver key health messages, including that hepatitis B is completely preventable and treatable. Providing a holistic health and family health approach to health promotion successfully breaks down stigma and discrimination improving attendance and engagement among Chinese and Korean Australians.

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