

REMOVING BARRIERS: AN ONLINE LEARNING MODULE FOR NURSES TO ELIMINATE STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS PEOPLE LIVING WITH BLOOD-BORNE VIRUSES

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Background/Approach: People living with hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV) often experience stigma and discrimination when accessing healthcare. Many factors influence the lives of people living with viral hepatitis, including country of birth, culture, sexuality and injecting drug use. Stigmatising attitudes and discriminatory behaviours relating to these factors, as well as the virus itself, can adversely impact an individual's access to engaging in screening, treatment and monitoring for viral hepatitis. Elimination will only be achieved if the care provided in healthcare settings is safe and acceptable to the people who are living with viral hepatitis.

Analysis/Argument: It's a nurse's responsibility to provide care that achieves the best outcomes for patients, families and communities. A new online learning module (OLM) enables nurses to reflect on how stigma and discrimination can impact on care they provide to people with a BBV. The OLM comprises five sections which focuses on what stigma and discrimination are, dispels myths about transmission, reinforces the efficacy of standard precautions, emphasises the nurse's role in maintaining privacy and confidentiality, and explores the intersectional sources of stigma and discrimination.

Outcomes/Results: The OLM will provide valuable insight into the attitudes and behaviours of nurses providing care to people with BBVs. This presentation will highlight comparisons between pre-course and immediate post-course survey data to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes and practice of participants completing the OLM. Data from a three-month follow-up survey will be presented which will evaluate sustained awareness, knowledge acquisition, and implementation to practice.

Conclusions/Applications: Building momentum towards elimination of hepatitis B and C in Australasia will require the elimination of stigma and discrimination first. Nurses will need to challenge their own attitudes and beliefs and those of their nursing peers to provide care that is safe, accessible and acceptable to those who are at risk or living with viral hepatitis.

Nil disclosures