

## **Connecting Hepatitis B Patients in the era of COVID-19: Hep B Writing Competition in Language**

### **Authors:**

<sup>1</sup>Mina Kim, <sup>2</sup>Shan Tao <sup>3</sup> Maria McMahon

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Hepatitis NSW, Sydney, Australia

**Background/Approach:** Diagnosis of hep B is below elimination targets, and patients are missing regular monitoring and care. Connecting people is one strategy to retain them in monitoring cycles, and to find missing people with hepatitis B. It is essential to increase public awareness and knowledge of hep B, address misinformation and reduce stigma. Inviting people to share their own story and experiences in a Writing Competition is a great way to connect the community, within COVID restrictions. It is an effective strategy to keep hep B in people's minds and increase callers and visits to the website.

**Analysis/Argument:** Many people with hep B, including newly diagnosed, are lost to follow-up or forget 6 monthly monitoring.

We designed a Hep B Writing Competition in language to engage Chinese and Korean participants.

Category 1 was for people with chronic hep B to write their own story of diagnosis, treatment, and impacts on their life. Category 2 was to write about their own or witnessed experiences of discrimination because of hepatitis B. Each category and language group had prize winners. Participants in category 1 were rewarded \$50 for their contribution, and all received a gift.

**Outcome/Results:** 7 stories from Korean and 5 from Chinese community members were collected for our website. This provides lived experience stories both in language and translated back into English. More people know about hep B, have corrected their misinformation and community stigma is reduced.

Some new lived experience speakers have been found, trained and employed. Some people did not know about Hepatitis NSW, that there are people who care about hep B, and they are not alone in this lifelong struggle.

**Conclusions/Applications:** The Hep B Writing Competition in language is a novel way to support people through their hep B diagnosis and treatment journey, and to develop support groups for their regular monitoring and wellbeing.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:** None