

Barriers and enablers of effective care provision for seasonal workers with Chronic Hepatitis B in regional Queensland

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Background

Seasonal workers from Pacific Island nations face social inequities and unique healthcare needs (1), including a high prevalence of Hepatitis B (2). There is limited understanding of the experiences of seasonal workers accessing Hepatitis B treatment and care in regional Queensland.

Aim and methods

Through qualitative interviews, this study aims to understand the health care experiences of Seasonal Workers with Hepatitis B (including barriers and enablers), and the experiences of health care and service providers who support Seasonal Workers in regional Queensland.

Barriers and enablers faced by seasonal workers (N=19) health and service providers (N=27)

Barriers

- Medicare ineligibility
- Private health insurance doesn't cover chronic health conditions
- Out-of-pocket healthcare costs
- Lack of continued access to treatment in home countries
- Lack of services in regional areas where seasonal workers live
- Casual employment conditions and rights
- Lack of translation services
- Cultural barriers
- Australian health system literacy
- Stigma
- Lack of routine hepatitis testing in home countries and Australia

Enablers

- Individual and service-based policies and procedures
- Individual and health service coordination of services
- Support from employers
- Individual and service relationships with employers



"Why would I want to go and see the nurse for an hour? I need to make money now and if I die from hepatitis B or liver cancer, well, that'll probably happen later on. I'll just forget about that for now" – Seasonal Worker

"If they [Seasonal Workers] come with a pre-existing medical condition, it's hard to provide any medical treatment for it because the health fund does not pay for it" – Clinician

1. Petrou K, Connell J. Our 'Pacific family': Heroes, guests, workers or a precariat? *Australian Geographer*. 2023;54(2):125-35.
2. Coalition for global hepatitis elimination. Data and statistics. Decatur, United States of America: The Task Force for Global Health; 2024 [Available from: <https://www.globalhep.org/data-profiles#>].