

# A CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE EVALUATION OF THE “HEP B STORY” APP IN A REMOTE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY IN ARNHEM LAND

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**Background:** Hepatitis B is endemic amongst the Australian Aboriginal population in the Northern Territory. A participatory action research project identified the lack of culturally appropriate education tools and led to development of the “Hep B Story” app in Aboriginal language Yolngu Matha. Community consultation with respect to formal evaluation of the app suggested that “knowledge based” assessments were intimidating to participants even if conducted in an individual’s first language and not culturally appropriate.

**Methods:** Semi structured interviews were conducted in a remote community in Arnhem land with local Community Based Researchers using voice recorders to capture the conversations. The recorded, translated conversations were then transcribed verbatim. Relevant quantitative and qualitative data was collected during the interviews and analysed alongside observations and experiences recorded through practical use of the app in a clinical setting.

**Results:** Between November 2018 and September 2019, 25 semi-structured interviews were conducted. All participants identified as Aboriginal. When asked 91% of participants felt the app would be culturally appropriate for Aboriginal communities in the NT. Many participants (69%) felt some of the information in the app was inappropriate or threatening. All participants felt there was shame associated with chronic hepatitis B (CHB). The information gathered from these interviews and data recorded during 20 clinical outreach sessions allowed for identification of three main themes (concept versus language, relationships and images) along with errors that required modification of either the translated or English version.

**Conclusion:** Majority of participants felt the app would be culturally appropriate for Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. The iterative evaluation process allowed for identification of multiple errors as well as crucial modifications to ensure the app remains culturally appropriate and medically accurate. Important lessons were learned which respectfully informed processes with the translation of the app into an additional ten Aboriginal languages, ultimately improving CHB health literacy.

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