

Real Results: Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service's Impact in Hepatitis C Eradication

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Background/Approach:

Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service (Derbarl), is the largest and oldest Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation in WA, providing culturally secure primary healthcare to approximately 17000 patients annually. Derbarl staff have embraced direct acting antiviral medications (DAAs) to address the disproportionate impact that Hepatitis C has had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Analysis/Argument:

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations are integral to ensuring a culturally appropriate and holistic approach to the management of chronic conditions. The DYHS Continuous Quality Improvement Group identified hepatitis C management as a priority in 2020. Over the last 5 years Derbarl has appointed Aboriginal Health Practitioners, Sexual Health Nurses and General Practitioners as 'Hepatitis C Champions'. Derbarl staff have worked to customise Communicare clinical items, reports and recalls to better suit the health profile and unique needs of Derbarl's patient population. Derbarl staff have implemented culturally relevant clinical items, detailed care planning templates, automated prompts for diagnostics and treatments, and integrated reminders for timely follow-ups. Derbarl GPs formed communities of practice with gastroenterologists to enable more complex patients to be managed in primary care and worked with Aboriginal Liaison Officers and Transport drivers to improve attendance. Derbarl staff worked with pharmacists to ensure DAA medications are webster packed and delivered and have developed a Communicare Audit clinical item to monitor patient outcomes.

Outcome: Through a strong focus on clinical quality improvement Derbarl has identified 544 patients with Hepatitis C. Derbarl's holistic approach has enabled clearance of 83% of patients with Hepatitis C and Derbarl's aim is to have cleared all patients by 2026 well ahead of the World Health Organisation's aim to eliminate Hepatitis C by 2030. This initiative exemplifies how culturally grounded, community-driven healthcare can achieve tangible, life-saving outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

"Derbarl Yerrigan Health services recognise the considerable contribution of the ASHM in facilitating the "Beyond the C" project. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations."