

Hepatitis C is a Rock N Roll Brand: Taking DBS Testing to Bluesfest

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Background

Hepatitis C is a Rock 'n Roll brand with a considerable impact on people associated with the music industry. BLUESFEST Byron Bay gathers 100,000 music fans each Easter long weekend. People attending BLUESFEST may have risk factors for or live with hep C, many being over 50-year-old baby-boomers into rock music and who have injected drugs in the past. Hepatitis NSW coordinated a stall offering Dried Blood Spot (DBS) self-testing for hepatitis C and HIV to the festival crowd, including fans, musicians, roadies, and event staff.

Analysis

Hepatitis NSW collaborated with Lismore Liver Clinic, Mid North Coast HARP, Lismore Sexual Health, and ACON Northern Rivers to run a much-coveted charity stall promoting hepatitis C information, treatment and cure and encouraging DBS HCV and HIV self-testing.

The DBS is designed for people who haven't recently tested, offering a quick self-test, with results given confidentially by specialist staff via text, phone, or email. Making hep C testing easy-to-access, on-the-spot within a music festival, with the combination of nurses, educators, counsellors, and community organisation staff acting as a bridge assisting with the online registration and testing process was a first.

Results

26 registrations and 12 tests were conducted over 5 days within the privacy of the stall. Over 500 people were engaged for hep C education, information, and health promotion services, and 700 hep C resources distributed, which promote hep C treatment to friends and family after Bluesfest. None of the people who tested received positive hep C PCR results despite identified risk histories.

Conclusion

Providing DBS testing within a music festival daily until 10 pm gave access to a diverse range of people not previously tested. The visibility of hepatitis C services and accessibility of DBS testing was palatable, and feedback indicates the event will be repeated next year.

Disclosure of Interest statement

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