

# **BARRIERS AND HELP-SEEKING PRACTICES: PERSPECTIVES OF SOUTH SUDANESE PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC HEPATITIS B IN AUSTRALIA**

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## **Background**

The challenges of engaging people with chronic hepatitis B (CHB) in treatment and care are well-known in Australia. The evidence points to the low use of hepatitis B clinical services. However, dearth evidence exists currently in Australia to highlight barriers and help-seeking practices among culturally and linguistically diverse people with CHB in Australia. The current study examines these issues among South Sudanese people with CHB in Australia. Such information facilitates the development of an effective intervention that encourages early help-seeking and promote use of hepatitis B clinical services.

## **Methods**

The study was qualitative research using semi-structured interviews with 15 adults South Sudanese people with CHB in Australia. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interpretative thematic analysis occurred by coding transcripts into several relevant categories and identifying the themes using NVivo 11.

## **Results**

In addition to the asymptomatic nature of hepatitis B, participants identified time constraint of health professionals, perceived inadequate clinical support, divergent views about treatment decisions, and lack of information as main barriers to their hepatitis B treatment and care. They used both formal and informal support networks when seeking informational, emotional, and material supports. The received support determined the use of both clinical and alternative therapies for hepatitis B treatment.

## **Conclusion**

The findings highlight barriers and the use of both informal and formal support networks when seeking help. The findings provide evidence for the delivery of person-centred hepatitis B services. The inclusion of family members and community health workers, as providers of informal support, in the care model for individuals with CHB might promote the use of hepatitis B services and lead to a positive health outcome.

## **Disclosure Of Interest**

None