

## Implementation of a hepatitis B community of practice in Barwon South West

### Authors:

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**Background/Approach:** Engagement in hepatitis B care is below the national average in Barwon South West (BSW), Victoria. Recent local qualitative work identified enablers to providing hepatitis B care in general practice (GP) including a community of practice (CoP) for hepatitis B s100 prescribers and GP software audits to identify priority populations for hepatitis B testing and linkage to care. This study describes implementation of a hepatitis B CoP and GP software audits in BSW.

**Analysis/Argument:** To establish the CoP, a working party was convened with clinicians, Cultura (multicultural support agency) and Western Victoria Primary Health Network (WVPHN). The integrated hepatitis nurse recruited hepatitis B s100 prescribers to the CoP and created a WhatsApp group with local specialists. CoP participants were offered funded secondments to specialist viral hepatitis clinics and BSW Public Health Unit to fulfil s100 professional development requirements.

With the support of WVPHN and ASHM, GP practice audits are in progress. Researchers are identifying how available audit tools can be utilised according to GP practice software and resources.

**Outcomes/Results:** Four of eight identified hepatitis B s100 prescribers have been recruited to the CoP and two have attended/are planned to attend funded secondments.

As a result of this pilot, a viral hepatitis auditing tool is now available to GP practices across the region through WVPHN's practice intelligence tool POLAR and has been used by one participating practice. As a data extraction tool, incomplete patient records are a barrier to optimal use, with country of birth not routinely recorded, but rather ethnicity, in keeping with Royal Australian College of General Practitioner standards.

**Conclusion/Applications:** Early signs are promising for the role of a CoP in informing initiatives to improve hepatitis B care. Engagement with local organisations that have a broad mandate to deliver healthcare and other essential services and key elements of the CoP.

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