

NO DRAMAS: ELIMINATING HEPATITIS B - RELATED SHAME IN THE CHINESE COMMUNITY

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Background:

Due to myths and misunderstandings, hepatitis B is stigmatised in the Chinese Australian community. It is associated with shame – those who are affected by hepatitis B feel ashamed of their condition, whilst others are too embarrassed to discuss and learn more about it. Hence, despite higher prevalence in the Chinese population, most Chinese people avoid hepatitis B testing, monitoring, and treatment. To increase diagnoses and treatment, Hepatitis NSW addressed the issue of hepatitis B-related shame through a grassroots arts-based approach.

Methods:

Hepatitis NSW worked in partnership with a Chinese Australian theatre company, a community organisation, local government, and key health services, to script and produce a Mandarin language hepatitis B educational play, with testing services available after the event. The play removes shame as a barrier by creating a safe space for audience members to learn about hepatitis B, empowering them to seek testing and treatment.

Strategies included:

1. Education

The play addresses common hepatitis B myths, and corrects knowledge without shame or judgement, and is culturally appropriate.

2. Reducing fear

The play follows the journey of an individual with hepatitis B. The audience's fear is reduced as they learn that people with the condition can lead normal and healthy lives, with regular monitoring.

3. Access to healthcare

The play demonstrates navigating the Australian healthcare system. Mandarin-speaking GP referral resources were distributed.

Results:

1,200 Chinese community members attended this production. Feedback surveys indicate 80% increased their knowledge of hepatitis B, and 95% would test for hepatitis B and planned to encourage family and friends to test too. 40 attended testing services.

Conclusion:

Hepatitis NSW's Mandarin language hepatitis B play is an innovative and effective approach to increase hepatitis B testing in the Chinese community. By removing shame, educating, and demonstrating healthcare pathways, community members are empowered to seek testing and appropriate medical services.
