

## LIVER BETTER LIFE: HEPATITIS C TREATMENT AWARENESS CAMPAIGN IN RURAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**Preferred theme:** Community and Social Research

**Preferred presentation type:** Practiced based oral presentation

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**Presenters biographies:** Presenters are educators at Hepatitis SA

**Audio-Visual requirements:** Laptop and projector (proj: small)

**Background:** In early 2017, Hepatitis SA ran an in-depth communications and community engagement pilot project over 2 months aimed at increasing hepatitis C treatment awareness / uptake in Murray Bridge, a rural town of approximately 21,000 people, 80km from Adelaide.

**Methods:** *The LiverBetterLife* - "Test. Treat. Cure hep C" campaign had 3 overlapping target groups – the general community; health and community workforces, and people living with hepatitis C.

Following 10 local consultations, the first stage was to provide education to the local health workforce, then along with general community awareness raising activities, to provide education to other local organisations to promote HCV testing and treatment to their clients.

Campaign resources developed included website, posters, coffee cups, coasters, fitpack stickers, GP packs

- 30 workforce education activities were provided for 243 participants, including GPs (10); pharmacists (10); Aboriginal health workers (10); allied health and hospital (62); other government workforces (99) and non-government agency staff (52).
- Promotional activities included radio, newspaper and social media, letterboxing, *Living Books* and 11 community education / awareness raising events directly engaged 511 community members, including people with hepatitis C.

**Results:** The local community was very supportive and all workforce and community education/awareness raising activities well received.

While we could measure campaign reach, we were unable to get treatment initiation data from GPs. However, data from local pharmacists and the South Australian community viral hepatitis nurses, indicated that treatment uptake remained steady when comparing pre and post campaign treatment rates.

**Conclusion:** The *LiverBetterLife* campaign was an opportunity to saturate one rural town with hepatitis C health promotion messages. It highlighted the challenge of evaluating health promotion programs in relation to HCV treatment outcomes.

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