

# Hepatitis B knowledge, stigma, and mistrust in healthcare among people of Filipino ethnicity in Australia: implications for culturally responsive prevention

## Authors

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**Background:** Chronic hepatitis B (HBV) disproportionately impacts culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations in Australia. Much of the existing HBV research among CALD populations has focused on Chinese and Vietnamese migrants, despite Filipino communities representing a substantial proportion of Australians living with chronic HBV. Despite high HBV endemicity in the Philippines, limited research has examined HBV knowledge, stigma, and trust in healthcare among Filipino communities in Australia. This study assessed HBV knowledge, attitudes toward people living with HBV, and mistrust in Western medicine, comparing individuals born in Australia with those born in the Philippines.

**Methods:** A community-based and online cross-sectional survey was conducted with Filipino adults living in Australia (n=576) between August 2022 and March 2023. Surveys were available in English and Tagalog. Knowledge (28 items), attitudes, and mistrust in Western medicine were compared across groups using Mann-Whitney U and Chi-square tests.

**Results:** Notable knowledge gaps were identified, with widespread misconceptions about HBV causes and transmission. Australian-born participants had significantly lower HBV knowledge (median=10.5 vs 12.0;  $p<.001$ ), more negative attitudes toward people living with HBV (median=20.0 vs 17.0;  $p<.001$ ), and greater mistrust in Western medicine (median=13.0 vs 10.0;  $p<.001$ ) than those born in the Philippines.

**Conclusions:** Routine vaccination and testing alone do not ensure adequate HBV literacy or reduce stigma. Culturally tailored, language-inclusive communication and strategies that strengthen trust in healthcare systems are required. These findings are informing co-designed HBV health literacy and stigma-reduction strategies with multicultural health services and Filipino community organisations to support improved linkage to care.

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**Keywords:** Hepatitis B; CALD; Filipino; stigma; migrant health; health literacy

**Theme/Discipline:** Social Science & Policy Research

**Topics:** Stigma and discrimination; Education and health promotion; Prevention; Testing; Community engagement

## **Disclosure of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest. This study was funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.

## **Presenting Author Biography**

**Prof Loren Brener** is a researcher at the Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW. Her work focuses on stigma and discrimination, health equity, culturally inclusive and responsive care, and community-engaged responses to viral hepatitis and other BBVs/STIs among priority populations and culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Australia.

## **AI Declaration**

No AI tools were used to generate research data, analysis, discussion, or writing up of the paper.