

SUPPORTING PEOPLE LIVING WITH CHRONIC HEPATITIS B (CHB) IN THE MYANMMER COMMUNITY

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Background/Approach: The Myanmar community is a new emerging community with a majority of people coming to Australia as refugees. The community is very diverse in terms of ethnicity and language spoken. The 2016 census showed that a very high percentage of people from the community either didn't speak English or didn't speak well. Furthermore, many of them are not well educated in their own language, and some are illiterate. Hepatitis B is a major health problem in the community but people diagnosed with hepatitis B are with little or no knowledge and understanding about the infection.

Analysis/Argument: People living with CHB from the Myanmar community face very complex challenges in managing their condition. Factors such as lack of understanding of the disease and Australia health system, low health literacy, different cultural and health beliefs, language barriers, stress and issues while settling in a new country and other health conditions could put them at higher risk of noncompliance. The Myanmar community health worker plays a key role in educating and supporting people living with CHB and their families and to navigate and link them to services.

Outcomes/Results: The presentation will discuss two cases, one with a very positive health outcome and the other progressing to severe liver disease. The two cases highlight the key issues in educating and supporting people with CHB who are vulnerable and marginalised.

Conclusion/Application: The experiences with the Myanmar community could be useful while working with other CALD communities in a similar situation.

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