OVERCOMING LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL BARRIERS – ENGAGING NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING COMMUNITIES FOR EDUCATION

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Background:
Hepatitis B largely affects people from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) but hepatitis B knowledge in these communities is very low. Language and culture are two major barriers that prevent people from accessing appropriate education around hepatitis B. It is crucial to address these two key issues when engaging and providing community hepatitis education to NESB communities.

Analysis:
Trained bilingual community health workers (BCHWs) from NESB communities are in the best position to effectively engage their communities and to deliver education because of their shared language, culture, values and life experiences. BCHWs are embedded in the communities and can built networks and long lasting trust relationships quickly. They can deliver the contents of the education without losing information in translation, and can generate discussions. Our project employed eight BCHWs from Asian and African communities to deliver face-to-face education to their communities in addition to health promotion and support activities.

Outcome:
From 1 January to 30 December 2017, a total of 47 face-to-face education sessions were delivered in community languages and 689 participants from different communities. The result of pre- and post- knowledge tests and feedback forms were collected showed a big increase in hepatitis knowledge among participants. From its commencement, the project has been subject to constant feedback, review and improvement. The various challenges of establishing and developing the project will be reported and discussed at the conference.

Conclusion:
Trained BCHWs were highly effective in engaging communities and delivering meaningful health education to improve hepatitis B knowledge. However, there many challenges that need to be considered and managed.

Disclosure of interest statement:
None