

UPDATING ESTIMATES DESCRIBING THE BURDEN OF HEPATITIS B IN AUSTRALIA.

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Introduction:

Key objectives of Australia's National Hepatitis B Strategy 2014-2017 include increasing the proportion of people living with chronic HBV (CHB) who have been diagnosed, increasing treatment uptake in those affected, and reducing the burden of attributable morbidity and mortality. Measuring progress towards these objectives through the use of associated indicators and targets allows for identification of appropriate interventions, and assessment of progress over time in order to shape the public health and policy response to hepatitis B in Australia.

Methods:

We extended an age-structured mathematical model for the transmission and progression of HBV in order to produce more robust estimates of the current burden of CHB in Australia, using a wide range of data sources. The model provides updated estimates for: (i) the number of people living with CHB, (ii) the proportion of people living with CHB that have not been diagnosed, and (iii) the burden of disease and deaths attributable to chronic hepatitis B in Australia.

Results:

The current prevalence of CHB remains around 1% of the population, however, the number of people living with CHB in Australia continues to increase due to the impact of migration. In order to reduce the number of people affected by adverse outcomes of CHB in Australia, treatment and monitoring needs to continue to increase.

Conclusion:

The burden of CHB in Australia remains significant, and the proportion diagnosed is still well below National Strategy targets. This analysis highlights the importance of continuing initiatives which aim to increase access to screening, care and treatment for individuals affected. This in turn will contribute to increasing the proportion of people living with CHB who are diagnosed and reducing the overall burden of disease.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: None to Disclose.