

## **Disclosure of hepatitis B and experiences of stigma among a sample of Chinese people living with hepatitis B in Australia**

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**Background:** Nearly 220,000 people in Australia are living with hepatitis B, of whom 18.5% were born in China. The aim of this study was to identify practices of and concerns around disclosure, access to care, and stigma and discrimination among a sample of Chinese people living with hepatitis B.

**Methods:** Chinese people living with hepatitis B (n=65) were recruited by the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland to complete an online survey. The survey measured disclosure practices, concerns around disclosure, perceived and experienced hepatitis B-related stigma, negative treatment by health workers, reduced access to care due to stigma, personal wellbeing, and frequency of checkups. Descriptive statistics were also used to describe the sample, while non-parametric correlations were used to measure the relationships between variables.

**Results:** While 65.6% of participants had disclosed their status to their doctor, only 18.8% reported disclosing to other health workers. Concerns around disclosure centered on whether they would be isolated by others (48.4%) and whether they would be a burden to family or an employer (20.4%). Those who reported greater perceived and experienced hepatitis B-related stigma tended to report having more concerns around disclosure ( $\tau_b = .424$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and poorer personal wellbeing ( $\tau_b = .199$ ,  $P < .05$ ). Negative treatment by health workers was associated with greater perceived and experienced hepatitis B-related stigma ( $\tau_b = .223$ ,  $p < .05$ ), lower frequency of check-ups ( $\tau_b = -.264$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and reduced access to care ( $\tau_b = .242$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Finally, participants who reported a greater frequency of check-ups reported higher personal wellbeing ( $\tau_b = .234$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

**Conclusion:** Findings highlight the need to support people living with hepatitis B to build community connectedness to mitigate the negative impacts of stigma, as well as among the broader community to address stigmatising attitudes towards hepatitis B.

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