

Needs and assets assessment of mothers living with hepatitis B in South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

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Background:

Pregnant women living with hepatitis B virus (HBV) and their babies are a priority population in the NSW Hepatitis B Strategy. Little is known about this population in South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD).

Methods:

This project analyses data from all women living with HBV giving birth in SESLHD from January 2019 to September 2022. Quantitative data included 181 birth events for 172 women, with data provided from Public Health Unit notifications following ethics approval.

The project also analyses qualitative information from semi-structured interviews with nine women living with HBV from the above data set and ten health workers involved in maternity care.

A literature review was completed.

Results:

No participants identified as Aboriginal or gender diverse and 88% were born overseas.

Birth events were spread across both the public (59%) and private (41%) hospital sectors, reinforcing that work needs to occur across both settings.

Medicare ineligibility was an issue, with one in six births involving a woman who did not have Medicare. The impact of Medicare ineligibility also varied by country of birth with Mongolia, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam having the highest proportion of ineligible women.

Qualitative results showed:

- Australian HBV healthcare is perceived positively
- A need for improved referral processes
- Challenges in balancing motherhood and HBV care
- Stigma remains an issue
- A lack of accessible information for participants

Conclusion:

Clear recommendations from gaps in services were drawn. These include the need to:

- Establish clear, service-specific referral pathways
- Build relationships between HBV and maternity services across private and public sectors
- Increase workforce development
- Provide flexible models of care e.g. telehealth, community access

- Target culturally and linguistically diverse communities – improving access to cross cultural workers, interpreters and education
- Increase advocacy to support the provision of monitoring and treatment options for Medicare ineligible patients

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Nil