

## THE NURSES ROLE WHEN THE HEPATITIS C IS CURED BUT THE CIRRHOSIS REMAINS

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**Background:** Chronic liver disease can result in progression to cirrhosis and liver failure. This can be difficult to manage as it involves multiple organ systems and complex pathophysiology. It is a major cause of premature death, poor quality of life and hospital readmissions. Given the complexity nurses play a key role in managing these patients. However, despite the growing burden of liver disease, improvements in therapies such as hepatitis C and nurse led models of care the number of endorsed hepatology related courses available to nurses remains low.

**Analysis/Argument:** Hepatology related education for nurses based in hospital and primary care nurses is needed to ensure an effective response to the growing burden of disease. We have developed several different strategies to support nurses; and improve the education and training of nurses.

**Outcome/Results:** In 2015 we piloted a 9 month university endorsed education program for nurses caring for patients with advanced liver disease. Four nurses completed the program. The program was successfully run in 2016 and 2017. This year we have 19 nurses participating. These nurses come from a range of settings including a regional clinic, justice health, tertiary inpatients and ambulatory care and an OST clinic. Many of the patients these nurses are managing have achieved a hepatitis C cure but their liver disease and complications remain. We also provide a nurse led support service for "hepatitis" nurses working in 4 different regional locations. In addition, since 2012 we have provided a twice yearly Hepatology Nurse Masterclass. This is day program and 80-100 nurses attend.

**Conclusion/Applications:** Despite significant advances in the treatment of hepatitis C and B the burden of advanced liver disease growing. Whilst the burden of advanced liver disease is growing more education programs targeted towards nurses will be required.