

Understanding the current policy and service context for seasonal workers with chronic hepatitis B virus in high-income countries

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Background: High-income countries have a long history of employing seasonal workers to fill domestic shortages in horticultural, agricultural and hospitality sectors. Many seasonal workers come from regions that have a high burden of hepatitis B virus (HBV). Yet, a lack of understanding around policies and services for seasonal workers exists in their host countries. As such, there is limited knowledge of how seasonal workers with chronic HBV are supported in accessing health services required for monitoring and managing HBV and its sequelae. This presentation forms part of a larger Australian government-funded project. It will provide an overview of policy analysis in high-income countries on healthcare access for seasonal workers with HBV.

Analysis: We used the 'logic of events model' to provide insights into the current context of health policies in high-income countries on HBV in seasonal workers. The model has been widely used in the literature to examine the determinants of health policies by synthesising policy goals, resources, obligations and opportunities.

Results: Our analysis found little evidence of policies on HBV in seasonal workers. In most cases, HBV has been grouped into blood-borne viruses and sexual health services, with few strategies across the spectrum linking policies to services and care. In addition, in many documents relating to national plans on HBV, seasonal workers have not been identified as a priority population despite often representing a significant long-term workforce population from regions with a high burden of HBV.

Conclusion: The analysis identified a gap in national strategies in high-income countries regarding HBV in seasonal workers. We call for including seasonal workers in national HBV strategies as 'priority populations' so that no one is left behind in eliminating HBV by 2030. Unfortunately, eliminating HBV will not be reached, given current national HBV strategies and policies do not include seasonal workers.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: The collaborators involved in the 'Reducing the impact of chronic hepatitis B (CHB) among seasonal workers in regional Queensland' project recognise the considerable contribution that industry partners make to professional and research activities. They also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations. The collaborators did not have any conflict of interest to disclose apart from their roles working in the viral hepatitis

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