

Understanding perceptions on feasibility of midwife-delivered care for hepatitis B during pregnancy in Vanuatu: Interviews with stakeholders

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Background: Vanuatu has an estimated hepatitis B prevalence of 9% and mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) is a major driver of transmission. Currently, management of hepatitis B is limited to hospital settings whilst antenatal care is decentralised to primary care settings, overseen by nurses and midwives. Scale up of interventions to prevent MTCT of hepatitis B requires decentralisation of care for hepatitis B during pregnancy. This study aims to understand perceptions among policy makers of the feasibility and acceptability of midwife-delivered interventions to prevent MTCT of hepatitis B in Vanuatu.

Methods: Semi-structured interviews in English or Bislama were conducted with policy makers and key stakeholders at the national and provincial level involved in hepatitis B care. An interview guide was used to assess feasibility and acceptability of midwife-delivered hepatitis B care during pregnancy, including both testing and antiviral prophylaxis. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and then translated with any identifying factors coded. Translation was reviewed by at least one additional person fluent in both English and Bislama to confirm accuracy and interviewer consistency. Interview data were then uploaded into NVivo X15 for thematic analysis. Analysis was conducted by one researcher and then discussed with additional researchers to ensure consistency and understanding of the interview context.

Results: A total of 12 interviews were conducted. All participants were supportive of midwife-led interventions to prevent MTCT of hepatitis B and thought it was feasible and aligned with current antenatal care practices. However, participants expressed a need for overall health system strengthening and challenges based on geographic location.

Conclusion: In general, there is support for the expansion of midwife-interventions to prevent MTCT of hepatitis B. However, there is a need for training, capacity strengthening, continuing engagement across all levels, human resourcing, financing, and strengthening of supply chains to ensure continuity of availability of test kits and medication.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

“The Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine and the 2025 Conference Collaborators recognise the considerable contribution that industry partners make to professional and research activities. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.”