

Yarnin' about hepatitis in a custodial setting: partnering with Justice Health NSW to combat the high prevalence of hepatitis B and C in custodial settings by using culturally relevant health resources and cultural strength as a backdrop for better health outcomes.

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Background/Approach: *Aboriginal and Torres-Strait Islander people are disproportionately represented in custodial settings and face significant health challenges, including higher rates of hepatitis B and C. Aboriginal people have a hepatitis C notification rate 7 times higher than non-Indigenous people, and a hepatitis B notification rate twice as high, with Aboriginal people being 7.8% of people living with hepatitis B. High rates of incarceration, with limited healthcare and harm reduction access, exacerbate the risk of acquiring viral hepatitis and disrupt access to care for individuals with these conditions.*

Analysis/Argument: *To address these challenges, culturally appropriate resources tailored to Indigenous needs are crucial. These resources should reflect cultural values, incorporate oral traditions, and be accessible to people with varying literacy levels. By bridging Western medical models with Indigenous knowledge, such resources can increase engagement and empower individuals in managing Hepatitis B and C. Promoting cultural strength and resilience plays a vital role in improving health outcomes. Indigenous people often draw strength from their cultural practices, community, and connection to land, which can serve as protective factors for both physical and mental well-being.*

Outcome/Results: *Healthcare interventions that align with these strengths are more likely to encourage treatment adherence, prevent re-infection, and reduce the cycle of health inequities. Hepatitis NSW has developed examples of taking this approach: the Yarnin' About Hep B and C booklets and pieces on Koori Radio. Building on this approach, Hepatitis NSW worked with Justice Health NSW and Koori Radio to develop culturally appropriate audio-visual resources that deliver hepatitis healthcare messages to Aboriginal people both inside and outside of custody.*

Conclusions/Applications: *Developing culturally relevant resources for custodial settings is essential for improving medical outcomes, reducing stigma, and promoting overall well-being. By centering resources on indigenous culture, strength, and identity, we can help indigenous people lead healthier lives, both in and out of incarceration.*

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