

DIGITAL STORYTELLING: A COMMUNITY TOOL TO END HEPATITIS B AND C STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

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Background: Stigma and discrimination remain a significant barrier to health care for people living with or at risk of hepatitis B and C. Digital story telling is a powerful tool currently being embraced across health-care settings to communicate the lived experience of people marginalised by society and address the myths that drive prejudice. Hepatitis Queensland (HQ) developed a suite of animations addressing the stigma and discrimination associated with people living with hepatitis B and C and explored the impact it had in changing perceptions in the community. HQ produced a two part, 90 second, hepatitis B animation series. Funded through Hepatitis Australia, the series shared the journey of an individual living with hepatitis B. Following overwhelmingly positive feedback, HQ commenced development of a hepatitis C story. This animation, funded through Queensland Health, explored the stories of two people who have been cured.

Analysis/Argument: Digital storytelling features a brief, personal narrative enhanced by sound, video, and imagery. Stories are user-generated and don't depend on a third party to frame the experience of the storyteller. Creating a digital story protects people's privacy and avoids the need for public disclosure, whilst still allowing their stories to be shared across many forums and within a variety of community and cultural groups.

Outcome: The hepatitis B and C animation series achieved an initial audience reach of over 100,000 through various platforms including live presentation, social media and Tonic Health Media. Positive feedback from both animations continues to flow in and have been, and continue to be, shared and utilised by a variety of stakeholders both nationally and internationally.

Conclusions/Applications: Stigma and discrimination is often framed through misperception and indirect truths supplied by those that live outside of the actual story. Through digital storytelling we can showcase honest and personal stories without the need for people to disclose their identity.

Disclosure of Interest Statement (example): Hepatitis Queensland operated this project through the support of Hepatitis Australia and Queensland Health funding. No pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this project.