

DO SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE GOOD ENOUGH? – LESSON LEARNT FROM WORKING WITH THE CHINESE COMMUNITY

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Background/Approach: The Chinese population in Australia has been growing rapidly in recent years. The 2016 census showed that over half a million of Australians were born in China, and China has overtaken New Zealand becoming the second largest source for migration in 2018. Consequently, chronic hepatitis B (CHB) continues to increase in the Chinese community. Currently people born in China comprises nearly 18% of all people living with CHB in Australia. However, due to the language barrier, Chinese people living in Australia usually access health information through Chinese social media and websites. Thus we are facing a huge challenge in understanding and engaging effective education messages to the community.

Analysis/Argument: Misinformation about hepatitis B is constantly shared through Chinese media that is easily and frequently accessed by the Chinese population in Australia. It fuels discrimination and stigma and hinders proper testing, management and treatment of CHB. Furthermore, different terms used in China and in Australia to describe the tests and infection stages of hepatitis B creating confusion among many. All of these have great impacts on hepatitis B education, testing, management and treatment in the Chinese community. Working with the Chinese community not only needs Chinese language skills to overcome the language barrier but also needs a deep understanding of what is happening in China.

Outcomes/Results: Our Chinese community health worker with a medical background monitors common misinformation circulated in the Chinese community and addresses it through local Chinese media, face-to-face education sessions, individual support and local Chinese social media groups. The presentation will analyse the common misinformation and some typical terms used only by the Chinese community and how we deal with them.

Conclusion/Application: What we learnt could be useful for people who work with the Chinese community on CHB prevention, testing, management and treatment in Australia.

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