

## **Blood safety & viral hepatitis – South Australian Police Education**

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**Background/Approach:** For many years the Hepatitis SA Education Team had been delivering training & education to South Australian Police (SAPOL) personnel but this had always been ad hoc with no set times, locations, timeframes or even length of the education.

**Analysis/Argument:** It had been more personality based depending on the SAPOL person organising it whether it will proceed or not.

**Outcome/Results:** Late last year the Hepatitis SA Education team successfully negotiated with the SAPOL Training & Development branch (T&D Branch) to deliver ongoing blood safety & viral hepatitis training and education sessions to all operational SAPOL personnel. The new 'Blood Safety & Viral Hepatitis' education was developed in collaboration with SAPOL T&D Branch. These sessions are SAPOL compliant, have an operational focus with key messages. SAPOL realise the importance of this training and have issued it with a Health Safety & Welfare code insuring that all operational police receive this training over a 5-year period.

Some of the key messages discussed include understanding hepatitis, blood borne viruses, vaccinations, treatments and transmission risks. As an operational police officer what do you do if you have received a needle stick injury, or had a blood exposure (what constitutes an exposure?) Who do you notify, what about blood on your clothing? Myths about viral hepatitis will also be discussed and dispelled, which is particularly important when looking to reduce stigma and discrimination.

**Conclusions/Applications:** Results of the evaluations from the sessions will be presented, including have police officers' knowledge about viral hepatitis improved, have their personal views changed, have myths been dispelled?

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