

Every Voice Counts: Expanding Hepatitis B Education for Midwives to Reach National Hepatitis B Strategy Targets

Authors:

Tran S¹, Mondel A¹, Bennett C¹, Hackett M¹
¹ASHM Health

Background:

There are several instances in the cascade of care where midwives play a vital role in reducing instances of vertical transmission of hepatitis B. Such as educating parents about the role and importance of Hep B birth dose.

Nationally, the HBV infant immunisation coverage for 12-month-old children was 93.2% in 2023. This was below the National HBV Strategy target of 95% from 2022. Midwives are in an optimal position to speak with pregnant patients on vaccines and other relevant prevention strategies including antenatal testing and immunoglobulin administration when required.

A needs assessment was conducted to confirm the HBV knowledge gap and preferences of midwives to guide development of HBV education in Australia.

Methods:

A desk review examining evidence on current Australian HBV midwifery education/research and current global vaccination and hepatitis B immunoglobulin research was conducted as a part of this needs assessment.

Additionally, in April to June 2025, ASHM coordinated an online survey and a series of semi-structured 1-hour interviews with midwives with varying experience and backgrounds to inform the needs assessment recommendations.

Results:

The desk review and recent evidence from an Australian midwife survey investigating attitudes towards childhood immunisation (including HBV) found that 69.4% (n=359) desired further training.

The online survey conducted by ASHM indicated that 75.68% (n=37) believed that there wasn't sufficient education and training on HBV during their midwifery studies. Noting 86.49% (n=37) preferring online training modules for future midwifery HBV education.

Overall, six overarching themes were found to guide future midwifery education on hepatitis B in Australia. Improving midwifery competence around HBV begins with inclusive, multimodal education.

Conclusion:

This needs assessment identifies critical yet addressable gaps in shaping tomorrow's midwifery education that is essential to reduce transmission of HBV and to meet the National HBV Strategy infant immunisation target of 95%.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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