

ORAL PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

HEALTH BEHAVIOURS AND HEALTH LITERACY: HEPATITIS B REGARDING SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN MIGRANTS LIVING IN QUEENSLAND

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Introduction: Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) is becoming an increasing health burden worldwide. Previous research indicates that lack of HBV awareness is a key contributing factor regarding individuals not engaging in preventative health behaviours, nor seeking medical treatment. A particular target group whom have higher rates of HBV are people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds; including migrants from Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries which are known to have higher rates of HBV infection. This study identified gaps in health literacy and HBV knowledge, and investigated how these factors influence related health behaviours among SSA migrants in Queensland.

Methods: Cultural workers from a community organisation recruited 187 SSA migrant participants via 'awareness stalls' in Queensland. Participants answered self-report surveys regarding HBV knowledge, health literacy and health-protective behaviours; utilising quantitative cross-sectional surveys. The research also replicated previous methodology and compared findings to previous studies conducted with other cultural groups.

Results: Preliminary findings indicated HBV knowledge significantly mediated health literacy and HBV screening. Health literacy (regarding self-efficacy) significantly predicted health behaviours (HBV screening, vaccinations). Participants with higher education and participants aged under 40 years of age, reported higher health literacy and engaged in more health-protective behaviours.

Conclusions: Preliminary findings indicate significant associations between health-protective behaviours, HBV knowledge and health literacy. Greater awareness of the relationships between these constructs may assist in creating more informed prevention and health promotion strategies for identified target communities to reduce health disparities.

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