



The Border Mail
1 McKoy Street
Wodonga
Victoria, 3689

Dear Editor

In your article "Syringe used in hold-up carried hepatitis-infected blood" (*Border Mail*, September 22, 2009), you explained that Samuel Richard Sammut used a syringe filled with his own blood containing the hepatitis C virus as a weapon, in an attempt to rob a pharmacy.

While we express our deepest empathy for the staff and customers of the Albury based pharmacy who were unduly forced to endure such a shocking and frightening experience, we feel it is important the community is aware of how hepatitis C is transmitted, and the risk of transmission via needle-stick injury.

Hepatitis C can only be transmitted when contaminated blood enters the blood stream of another person.

Even in the healthcare setting, where a worker accidentally receives a needle stick injury from a syringe containing blood with the hepatitis C virus in it, the chances of that worker contracting hepatitis C is between 3-5 per cent.

While wielding a syringe with blood containing the hepatitis C virus is irresponsible, reckless and unacceptable, generally people with hepatitis C are very diligent when it comes to eliminating their chances of passing on the virus to other members of the community.

Anyone seeking information on hepatitis C can call 1300 437 222 (1300 HEP ABC).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stuart Loveday". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stuart Loveday
Executive Officer
23 September 2009