Addressing stigma associated with hepatitis B among Chinese and Korean Australians: Family Health and Cancer Prevention

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Background
At the end of 2017, an estimated 233,947 people were living with chronic hepatitis B infection in Australia, of those, 21% were born in Northeast Asia and 17% were born in Southeast Asia. Most people who are living with hepatitis B in Australia became exposed at birth through mother to child transmission. Hepatitis NSW bilingual educators work with Chinese and Korean communities to raise awareness, encourage vaccination, screening, monitoring and treatment of hepatitis B.

People living with hepatitis B in mainland China and Korea experience significant discrimination, largely attributed to misunderstandings about transmission, with most people regarding HBV as highly contagious and fatal. Common misperceptions, such as that hepatitis B can be transmitted by sharing drinking glasses, cooking utensils and food, highlight lack of awareness.

Results
From July 2018 to June 2019, 2,811 Chinese and Korean Australians have received information and education sessions covering hepatitis B, transmission, vaccination, harm reduction, monitoring and treatment. Over 78% of participants who have not already been tested for hepatitis B would consider doing so, and 90% would recommend their family members undergo testing.

Conclusion
Health promotion events with broad appeal strengthen the opportunity to deliver key health messages, including that hepatitis B is completely preventable and treatable. Providing a holistic health and family health approach to health promotion successfully breaks down stigma and discrimination improving attendance and engagement among Chinese and Korean Australians.


Disclosure of Interest Statement
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