

Connecting Hepatitis B Patients in the era of COVID-19: Hep B Writing Competition in Language

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Background/Approach

Hepatitis B is a highly stigmatised disease - and the stigma is often associated with a lack of education and information surrounding hepatitis B. Particularly in many culturally and linguistically diverse communities, there is a lot of ignorance, and myths and misconceptions. These have led to people's unwillingness to disclose their disease status and engage with medical professionals. We have heard several stories of people who felt shocked, scared and overwhelmed when they were first diagnosed with hepatitis B, as well as experiences of stigma and discrimination they had in schools, workplaces and relationships.

In Australia, diagnosis of hep B is below the elimination targets, and diagnosed patients are "missing" and not attending for regular monitoring and care. Connecting people is one strategy to retain them in monitoring cycles, and to find missing people with hepatitis B.

Hepatitis NSW held a writing competition aiming to provide people living with or affected by hepatitis B with a platform to write about their stories and feelings, so that more people can get inspired and reach out for services and medical support, and collectively help to build a supportive environment for people with hepatitis B.

Furthermore, the writing competition was a great way to connect the community during COVID lockdown restrictions. It was an effective strategy to keep hepatitis B in people's minds and increase callers and visits to our website and in-language pages and website hep.org.au.

Analysis/Argument

Many people with hepatitis B, including newly diagnosed, are lost to follow-up or forget or avoid 6 monthly monitoring.

We designed a Hepatitis B Writing Competition in language to engage Chinese and Korean participants.

Category 1 was for people with chronic hepatitis B to write their own story of diagnosis, treatment, and impacts of hepatitis B on their life. Category 2 was to write about their own or witnessed experiences of discrimination because of hepatitis B. Each category and language group had prizes for winners. In addition, participants in category 1 were rewarded \$50 for their contribution, and all received a gift, to encourage people living with hepatitis B to participate.

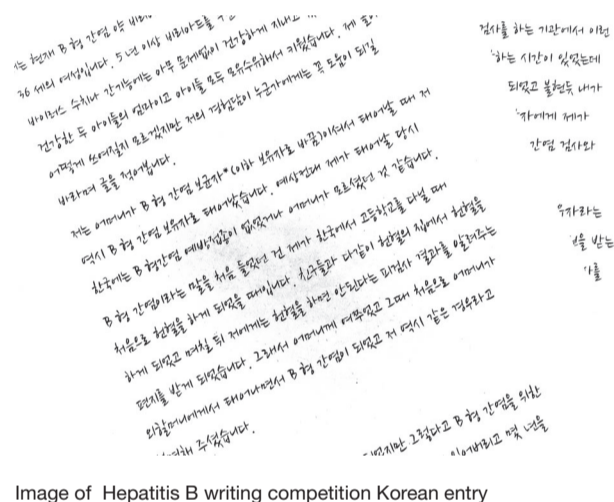
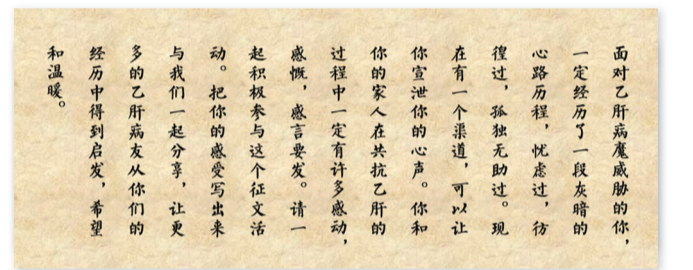


Image of Hepatitis B writing competition Korean entry



Korean Writing Competition 2nd Winner Sooni Lee



Event Invitation in Chinese

Outcome/Results

7 stories from Korean community members and 5 from Chinese community members were collected for our website. This provides lived experience stories both in language and translated back into English. We have promoted the stories on social media. Visits to the story's pages have increased. More people know about hepatitis B, have corrected their misinformation and community stigma is being reduced.

Some new lived experience speakers have been found, trained, and employed as another outcome of the Hep B Writing Competition. Some people did not know about Hepatitis NSW, that there are people who care about people living with hepatitis B, and they are not alone in this lifelong struggle.

Conclusions/Applications

The Hep B Writing Competition in language is a novel way to support people through their hepatitis B diagnosis and treatment journey, and to develop support groups for their regular monitoring and wellbeing.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: None



Event flyer in Chinese

Event flyer in Korean



Korean Competition 3rd Winner Viola and her daughter



Scan to read the Korean winners story



Scan to read the Chinese winners story



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MAY 2022