

An Aboriginal community resource “Yarnin’ about hep B”



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Background

Despite universal hepatitis B vaccination in Australia HBsAg prevalence remains four times higher among Indigenous Australians compared with non-Indigenous people. This is predominantly due to lack of access to health services, particularly affecting people born before the vaccination program commenced. Mother to baby transmission at birth or early childhood exposure has created a cohort of people living with chronic hepatitis B in need of culturally appropriate resources for themselves, their family, and their community.

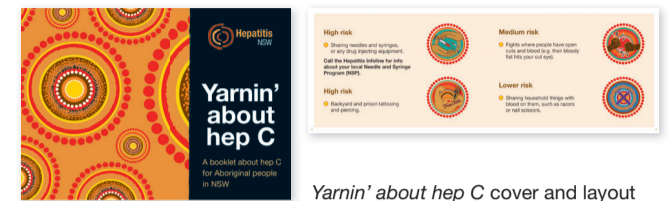
Whilst there are several hepatitis B resources available, they are largely targeted to health professionals. There were no NSW Aboriginal community focused print resources. Print resources offer the community audience information and referrals, and can support access to health care and services relating to hepatitis B.

Hepatitis NSW had previously produced a popular NSW Aboriginal community focused hepatitis C resource named

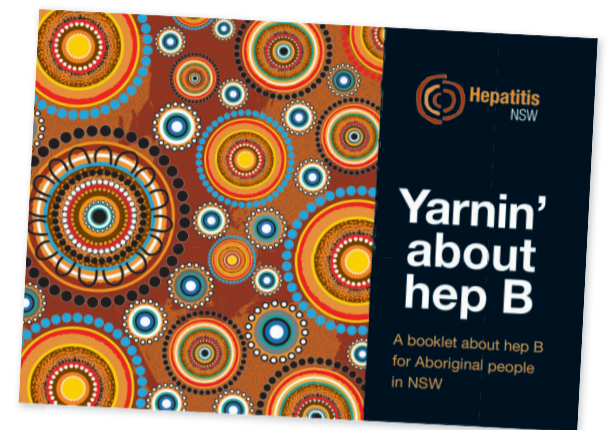
Yarnin’ about Hep C, and recognised the need for a hepatitis B companion to that resource, that could build on the format and look to create a visually related resource. Drawing on our long-standing experience and expertise in health promotion resource development around hepatitis C, and input from clinical specialist and community health workers across NSW, Hepatitis NSW are developing an Aboriginal culturally appropriate hepatitis B information booklet. As with *Yarnin’ about hep C*, the hepatitis B focused booklet showcases beautiful supporting artworks by the Aboriginal artist, Jasmin Sarin.

It will be a key resource that helps meet the goals and targets described within the *Third National Hepatitis B Strategy*, the *NSW Hepatitis B Strategy 2014-2020*, and the *Fifth National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Blood Borne Viruses Strategy 2018-2022*.

Developing this resource is part of Hepatitis NSW’s commitment to support work that will help Close The Gap.



Yarnin’ about hep C cover and layout



Yarnin’ about hep B cover

Approach

It is well recognised as an important component of effective community based health responses that health promotion tools are developed in consultation with Aboriginal people to maximise the relevance, accessibility and appropriateness to the audience.

To this end, Hepatitis NSW established an Advisory Committee of Aboriginal community and sector workforce members to oversee the development of the *Yarnin’ About Hep B* booklet and its initial promotion and delivery to Aboriginal communities across NSW.

The committee:

- ensures community involvement and relevant sector expertise
- informs the feel, theme and core messaging of the *Yarnin’ About Hep B* booklet
- ensures that the resource is developed with, and informed by, Aboriginal community involvement
- ensures the resource is supported by the sector, and
- ensures the resource meets the needs of Aboriginal people living with hepatitis B and those at risk of having or contracting the virus.

This project’s purpose is to:

- achieve cultural appropriateness in Aboriginal hepatitis B health promotion, and health messaging
- increase the number of Aboriginal people being screened and vaccinated against hepatitis B
- increase the number of Aboriginal people living with hepatitis B engaging in ongoing monitoring, and follow-up
- increase Aboriginal people’s knowledge on hepatitis B and address and reduce the associated shame and stigma

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Hepatitis NSW is funded by the NSW Ministry of Health.

Outcome

The booklet aims to improve health outcomes of Aboriginal people living with hepatitis B and to support prevention, screening, monitoring, and management by:

- encouraging those at risk of hepatitis B to talk with their health care worker and ask to be tested
- encouraging people to know their immunity status
- promoting the universal childhood vaccination program
- increasing Aboriginal people’s understanding of hepatitis B, prevention, treatment, and the long- term health implications
- encouraging Aboriginal people living with hepatitis B to undertake regular review and monitoring of their hepatitis B status, and treatment where clinically recommended
- promoting healthy living, irrespective of hepatitis B
- empowering people with correct information to address and respond against the impact of BBV stigma



Yarnin’ about hep B layouts on: Men’s Business, disclosure and sex and hep C.



Community consultations

A series of structured consultations have been developed and undertaken by Hepatitis NSW, with Aboriginal community and BBV sector workforce. The consultations focused on resource content, dimensions, format, wording, artwork, and storytelling. The aim is to ensure the resource provides information and calls to action that resonate with and encourage sharing throughout the community.

Drafts have been reviewed by Aboriginal workers and BBV sector staff, along with the Hepatitis NSW Medical and Research Advisory Panel, for content relevance, accuracy, accessibility, cultural appropriateness, and appeal.

Artwork was commissioned from the Aboriginal artist responsible for the *Yarnin’ about Hep C* booklet to create visual relationships and identity for these companion resources.

Prior to finalisation, the resource is being further focus tested with community members in metropolitan and rural settings by Aboriginal health and community sector workers to ensure it meets community and service’s needs.

Conclusions

The participation and involvement of Aboriginal people, including Aboriginal people at risk of hepatitis B, community, and Aboriginal sector workforce members, in all stages of development is essential and maximises the use and reach of a resource. It ensures it is inclusive, speaks to the reader and information contained in it can be shared through storytelling.

The *Yarnin’ about hep B* resource is an accessible, culturally appropriate, and relevant resource for Aboriginal people in NSW. It will act as a tool for engagement within ACCHS settings and within community engagement activities to inform and prompt action on hepatitis B for this priority population. It is available to order free from the Hepatitis NSW website. It will also be available to Aboriginal people at events throughout NSW and will be included in the NSW prison hepatitis information packs distributed by Hepatitis NSW Infoline.

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