

# No Dramas: Eliminating Hepatitis B-Related Shame In The Chinese Community

## BACKGROUND

Due to myths and misunderstandings, hepatitis B is stigmatised in the Chinese community. It is associated with shame – those who are affected by hepatitis B feel ashamed of their condition, whilst others are too embarrassed to discuss and learn more about it. Hence, despite being highly prevalent in the Chinese population, most Chinese people avoid hepatitis B testing, monitoring, and treatment. To increase diagnoses and treatment in the Chinese community, Hepatitis NSW addressed the issue of hepatitis B-related shame through a grassroots arts-based approach.



## ABOUT THE PLAY

*Love Liver, Love Life* is an in-language educational comedy that was written by the community for the community. The plot follows a newly-migrated family's story on coping with a hepatitis B diagnosis.

What happens when Liu Yun finds out that she is living with hepatitis B? The play presents a light-hearted approach to a serious topic. With relatable characters and witty lines, the production really engaged and held the audience's attention. It also reassured them that a positive diagnosis is not as tragic as they may have once believed.



## METHODS

Hepatitis NSW worked in partnership with a Chinese Australian theatre company, a community organisation, and key health services, to produce a free Mandarin language educational play on hepatitis B, with testing services available after the event. The play removes shame as a barrier by creating a safe space for audience members to learn about hepatitis B, empowering them to seek testing and treatment.

Strategies included:

### 1 EDUCATION

The play addresses common hepatitis B myths by having characters explicitly discuss these topics. Through this, the audience's knowledge is effectively corrected without shame nor judgement.

### 2 REDUCING FEAR

The play follows the journey of an individual with hepatitis B. The audience's fear is reduced as they find that people with the condition can lead normal and healthy lives with regular monitoring.

### 3 ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

The play demonstrates navigating the Australian healthcare system, with particular emphasis on Medicare. Mandarin-speaking GP and Liver Clinic referral resources were distributed.

## RESULTS

650 Chinese community members attended this production. The play was extremely well-received, and many audience members requested for more in-language edutainment in the future.

Feedback indicates 80% increased their knowledge of hepatitis B, and 95% would test for hepatitis B and planned to encourage family and friends to test too. All actors and actresses tested for hepatitis B, and 20 audience members attended the testing services.

## CONCLUSION

Hepatitis NSW's Mandarin-language play is an innovative and effective approach to increase hepatitis B testing in the Chinese community. By removing shame, community members are empowered to meaningfully engage with hepatitis B, and hence are willing to seek testing and appropriate medical services.

