



This is hepatitis...



Australasia

Cost Effectiveness of Needle and Syringe Programs in Australia

A report has revealed that needle and syringe programs have prevented almost 100,000 people from becoming infected with hepatitis C infection in Australia. The findings demonstrated that needle and syringe programs not only save lives and are cost effective, but are cost saving. For every dollar invested in needle and syringe programs, four



dollars are returned, as life threatening hepatitis C and HIV infections and associated healthcare costs are averted.

The report, revealed that the 30 million needles and syringes distributed every year in Australia over the past decade ensured that 97,000 hepatitis C infections were averted, yet 50 per cent of all injections were still with an unsterile syringe; proof there is room for expansion.

Released in October 2009, the report was conducted by researchers at University of New South Wales' (UNSW) National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research, Return on Investment 2: Evaluating the cost effectiveness of needle and syringe programs in Australia.

It received good media coverage throughout Australia, with the story being covered in print, radio, television and online media. The full report is available at: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/needle-return-2>

Hepatitis B in Australia: Projecting Mortality, Morbidity and Economic Impact

A report released in October by the Australian Centre for Economic Research on Health at the Australian National University, predicts that the number of people in Australia with chronic hepatitis B infection will increase markedly over the next decade.

The report provides a comprehensive review of the epidemiology and economics of hepatitis B infection in Australia, and projects the mortality, morbidity and direct economic costs likely to arise from hepatitis B infection over the next decade.

Although Australia has adopted a universal hepatitis B vaccination for infants, there are many people already infected for whom vaccination offers no benefit.

There are currently no screening programs for hepatitis B in Australia, and only a small number of those eligible for treatment are utilising this option.

A full copy of the report can be downloaded from www.acerh.edu.au/publications.php

National Strategies for Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C

Australia is currently in the process of creating the third National Hepatitis C Strategy and the first Hepatitis B Strategy. The development of the new national strategies is being overseen by the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmitted Infections.



The national hepatitis B and hepatitis C strategies will guide Australia's response to hepatitis B and C over the next three years.

2009 National Hepatitis Health Promotion Conference

The 2009 National Hepatitis Health Promotion Conference 'Grass Roots to National Action' was held on the 29th & 30th October. The conference, featuring plenary sessions, skills workshops and health promotion project presentations, was attended by over 160 delegates from the hepatitis sector across Australia.

The aim of the conference was to provide a forum for the exchanging of ideas and the presentation of effective health promotion projects and initiatives, as well as provide networking opportunities for those who work diligently around viral hepatitis.



Planning for National Hepatitis Awareness Week 2010

Hepatitis Australia conducted a planning workshop with member organisations to discuss campaign fundamentals and review the management processes from 2009. The formal planning process for 2010 will commence shortly.

Hepatitis Australia has conducted a series of meetings with potential sponsors to enhance the funding for the 2010 campaign.