

## **New review says cultural safety and community-led approaches critical for effective BBV prevention and treatment**

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[A new review of epidemiology, prevention and management of blood-borne viruses \(BBV\) experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples](#) produced by the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet show that colonisation and historical trauma continue to impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes related to BBVs, including higher rates of hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV.

The authors of the review noted that addressing the ongoing challenges of BBVs among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples requires a multifaceted approach that prioritises cultural safety, community empowerment, and health system reforms. While significant progress has been made, particularly through Aboriginal-led health services and peer-based initiatives, there remain critical gaps in service delivery, screening, and treatment accessibility, particularly for remote and high-risk populations. Ongoing research and targeted interventions are essential to inform culturally appropriate and effective public health strategies. By continuing to invest in these areas, future efforts can significantly reduce the burden of BBVs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and promote better health outcomes.

Lead author Katiska Davis from Curtin School of Population Health said “Future efforts to prevent and manage BBVs among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must address persistent challenges through culturally responsive and community-driven approaches. One of the key priorities is expanding access to culturally safe healthcare. Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services play a vital role, but mainstream health services must improve their cultural competence as well, particularly in understanding stigma and discrimination, to increase engagement and improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples”.

Katiska Davis also noted “There is also a critical need to improve BBV screening and treatment programs, particularly in remote and high-risk populations. Integrating innovative approaches, such as mobile clinics, point-of-care testing, and outreach services, to increase accessibility and equity in healthcare delivery”.

HealthInfoNet Director Professor Bep Uink said of the review “It was encouraging to read that community-led health initiatives have shown promise in addressing BBVs in Aboriginal communities and that programs like the Deadly Liver Mob have successfully employed peer-driven health promotion to increase BBV screening and treatment uptake. The HealthInfoNet commissioned this important review as part of its ongoing efforts to provide high quality evidence-based information to inform policy and practice”.

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More information: The HealthInfoNet is a comprehensive Internet resource that informs practice and policy in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health by making up to date research and other knowledge readily accessible. It contributes to closing the gap in health between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. For over 27 years, working in the area of knowledge exchange with a population health focus, the HealthInfoNet makes research and other information freely available in a form that has immediate, practical utility for practitioners and policy-makers enabling them to make decisions based on the best available evidence. [www.healthinfontet.ecu.edu.au](http://www.healthinfontet.ecu.edu.au)