

Knowledge of Hepatitis B Among Hmong College Students

Researcher(s):

LeePao Khang, Ph.D., Part-Time Faculty
Department of Public Health, Fresno State

Keith Burgess, Student
Master of Public Health, Fresno State

Abstract:

Introduction: Asian Americans have the highest prevalence of hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection and are 8-13 times more likely to develop liver cancer than any other racial groups in the United States. Hmong have one of the highest prevalence of HBV infection (16.7%) among all Asian American subgroups. Of the limited studies that examined Asian American college students' knowledge of HBV, none has included Hmong students. Purpose: The purpose of this research project was to assess Hmong college students' knowledge of HBV.

Methods: A confidential and anonymous online survey assessing HBV knowledge was sent to all Hmong students (N=1,511) enrolled at Fresno State during Fall 2017. There were 12 questions that assessed knowledge level. One point was given for each correct answer. An overall knowledge score was calculated as the sum of correct answers to the 12 questions (score ranges from 0-12), with a higher score indicating higher knowledge level.

Results: A total of 423 students participated in the study (response rate of 28%). Only 23.2% stated that they had had a hepatitis B test. About 46% thought that HBV could be spread through coughing and sneezing. Mean knowledge score was 6.61 (SD = 3.25), indicating average knowledge level of HBV. There was no statistically significant difference in knowledge level between males and females ($p=0.40$). Students in health-related majors had significantly higher knowledge level compared to those in non-health related majors ($p = 0.02$).

Conclusion: HBV educational programs targeting Hmong college students are needed, especially to those in non-health related majors. HBV screening effort is also needed to reduce the burden HBV-related liver disease morbidity and mortality in this population.