

Wellbeing Intervention for Chronic Kidney Disease (WICKD)

The WICKD randomised controlled trial aimed to see if the Stay Strong App was effective for reducing distress and depression for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on haemodialysis. We compared Stay Strong to a physical health app (The Hep B Story) and also to no app at all but treatment as usual (TAU).



The App Interventions

Two apps were used in this study. The wellbeing intervention was **The Stay Strong App**. The other intervention was **the Hep B story**, an app about physical health. We used two so that we could check whether it was the extra attention received by those in the wellbeing intervention group that made a difference, or whether the intervention itself was most important. Both apps have pictures and plain English text.

The SS App is a strengths-based approach to goal setting. It uses a 4-step approach: 1) think about family and friends who keep you strong, 2) think about the things that keep you strong, 3) think about your worries 4) set goals for change. It includes some tips for wellbeing and substance use. The user makes personal decisions and choices throughout.

The Hep B App tells the story of Hep B, a physical health condition that is somewhat relevant to their current health status. There is a game at the end. They do not need to make personal decisions or choices throughout.

Treatment as Usual (TAU) was all the third group received. They did not receive any intervention apart from the assessments (which were also delivered via an app).

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Data Analysis is Done!

All data has been collected for the WICKD study! A total of 156 people on haemodialysis participated in the study across Darwin and Alice Springs over 3 years (2017-2019). Of the participants who took part:

- 62 received Stay Strong at baseline
- 61 received Hep B at baseline
- 33 received no intervention at baseline

Participants were assessed for distress, depression and quality of life at the start of the study, at 3 months and at 6 months.

All participants received Stay Strong after their 3 month assessment.

About 93% of those recruited were followed up.



A big THANKYOU to all the participants of the WICKD study and all the staff of the Renal Services who made this study possible. Your help and support are very much appreciated!

WHAT WE FOUND!

Hep B Story group showed reduced distress and depression immediately (at 3 months). This change remained at 6 months after also receiving Stay Strong at 3 months.

Stay Strong group showed reduced depression immediately (at 3 months) and reduced distress at 6 months (after receiving SS twice) *only in those who showed moderate to severe symptoms of depression or distress at the start.*

Stay Strong was not effective for people who did not have moderate to severe symptoms of distress or depression at the start.

There was some evidence that people in the **treatment as usual group**, who got only the assessments, also benefited from the study at 3 months. They had reduced distress scores (but not reduced depression scores).

What does this mean?

- Using apps for treatment can improve wellbeing for people on dialysis.
- Simple apps like the Hep B story that focus on physical health through storytelling may lead to rapid improvements in wellbeing.
- Wellbeing apps like Stay Strong may work best for those who already have symptoms of distress or depression.
- Wellbeing apps like Stay Strong may work best when delivered more than once. This may be because they are more complex and take more concentration to use.
- Simply talking to patients about their wellbeing through doing an assessment may lead to short-term improvements in wellbeing.



So, What's Next?

We want to **understand** “*what elements of the Hep B Story app and the Stay Strong App can be brought together to make one wellbeing intervention which is likely to be acceptable and effective for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic conditions such as kidney disease?*”

To do this we plan to talk to stakeholders (people with chronic conditions such as kidney disease, carers or service providers) about what the findings tell us and how we can bring the elements of the two apps together.

We will then **modify the Stay Strong App** to incorporate suggested elements. We look forward to having a brand-new version of the Stay Strong App for people with kidney disease.

Feedback

If you have any feedback on the study, study results or ideas for sharing the knowledge gained from this study, please feel free to contact us on the details below.

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