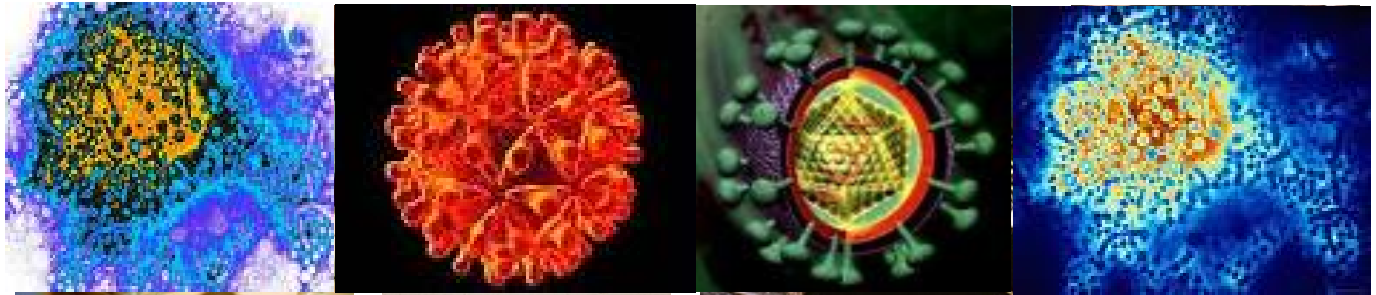


Bushwacked: The Lowdown on Viral Hepatitis



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**How do you
define rural?**



Rural defined as....



outside city

found in or living in the country



typical of country

relating to or characteristic of the country or country living

agricultural

relating to, characteristic of, or involving farming



***Bushwacked:
dispelling myths**

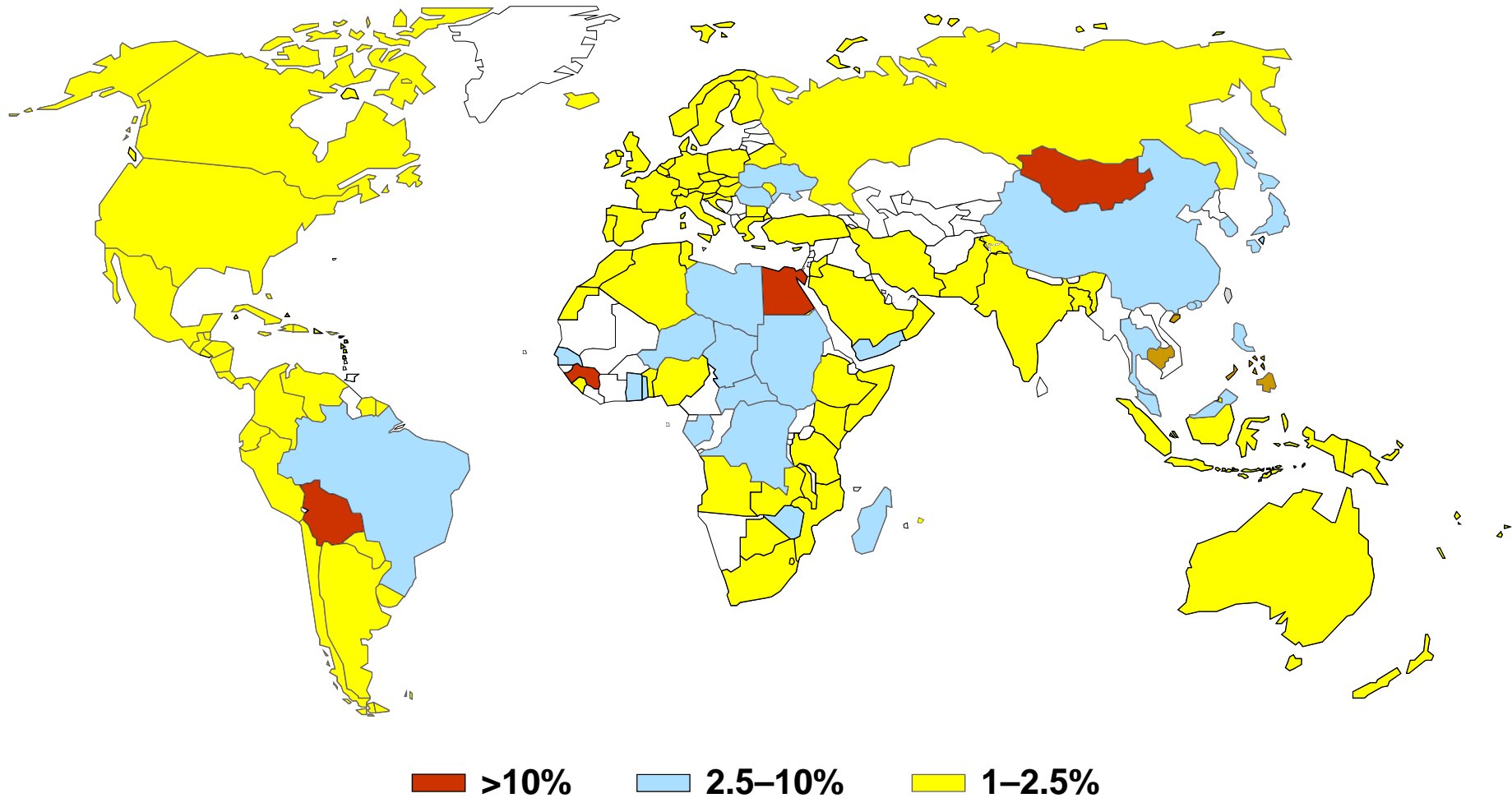
Victorian Notifications of Hepatitis C

Geographical region	Hepatitis C notifications
North & West Metropolitan	959
Southern Metropolitan	532
Eastern Metropolitan	254
Barwon South Western	190
Gippsland	147
Loddon Mallee	143
Hume	123
Grampians	98

*Did you know.....

- ~ 1% of the Australian population has Hep C
- ~ 250,000 people in Australia
- ~ 14,000 new infections a year (was 16,000 until 2005)
- ~ 1 new infection every 32 minutes
- Affects ~ 60% men and 40% women
- Majority diagnosed 13 years after initially infected

Prevalence of Hepatitis C infection



Did you know.....

Estimated 175 million people are infected globally

Overall prevalence of chronic infection rates in:

- 5.3% Northern Africa
- 3.5% Greece
- 3.0% China
- 2.4% South East Asia
- 2.4% Italy
- 1.8% USA
- 0.8% UK

Did you know.....

Hep C is the fastest growing infectious disease in Australia

Conservative estimates indicate by 2020 people infected with HCV will be 320,000 but if present trends continue a figure of 800,000 is not unreasonable

*Transmission of hepatitis C

- Blood to blood contact
- Sharing injecting equipment
- Blood transfusions pre 1990
- Tattooing and body piercing
- Mother to baby (5%)
- Medical procedures from overseas
- Sexual ONLY if blood to blood contact occurs

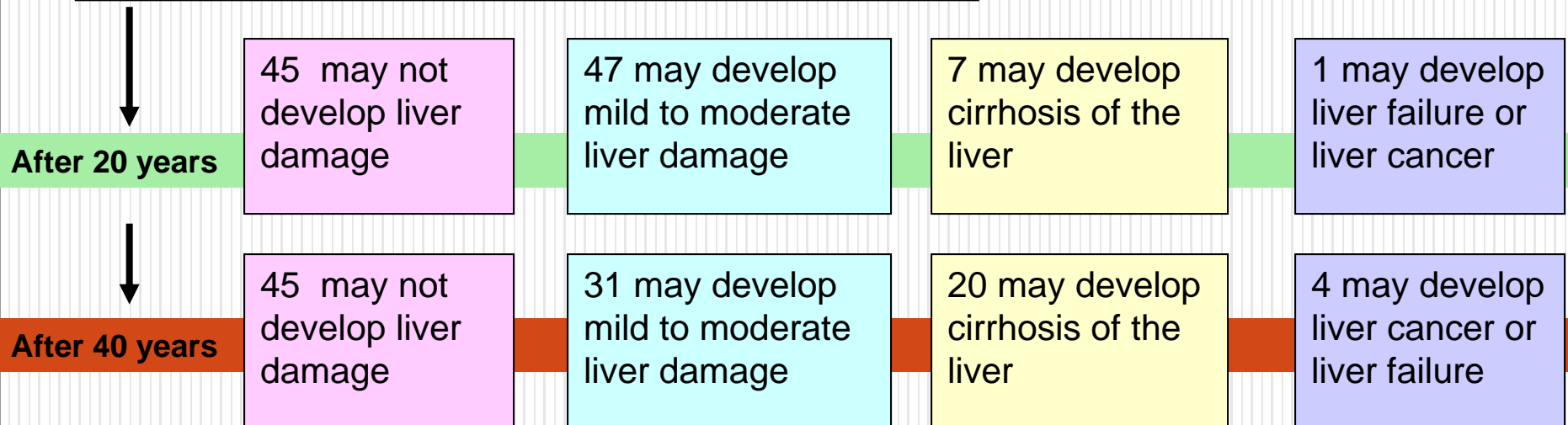
The hepatitis C virus is found only in

BLOOD

Hepatitis C progression

- ~ 25% of people who contract hepatitis C will clear their infection naturally within the first 12 months
- ~ 75% of people who contract hepatitis C will have chronic (ongoing) infection

Of 100 people with chronic hepatitis C who remain untreated:



Bushwacked:

What are the rural issues?

RURAL ISSUES

General
Practitioner
issues

Cost of Travel

Distance &
Geography

Confidentiality

Isolation
from health
services

Health
professionals
lack of hepB/C
knowledge

Allied
Health
availability

Friendship &
family networks

Long waiting
lists

Lack of
specialist
clinics

Lack of
specialists

Case Study – Victoria

- A **cluster of hepatitis C cases** linked to an anaesthetist at a private medical centre in Croydon.
- More than **4,000 patients** - including 3,000 from the Croydon clinic (procedures between January 2008 and December 2009) have been followed up.
- **49 women** had genetic sequencing of the hepatitis C virus which linked their infection to the anaesthetist.
- **19 women** had initial testing which indicated past infection with hepatitis C but the patients had either cleared the virus naturally or there was insufficient virus present to make a definitive ruling.
- **241 women** were unable to be contacted, despite repeated calls and registered letters.
- **247 womens** results have not been provided to the Department of Health.

Case Study – Victoria

DoH extended their investigation and contacted:

- 1,000 patients who underwent procedures involving the anaesthetist at three other facilities between 2008-2009
 - Fertility Control Clinic *
 - St Albans Endoscopy Centre *
 - Western Day Surgery *

No cases of hepatitis C could be linked to the anaesthetist at any of these facilities

Case Study – Rural Issues

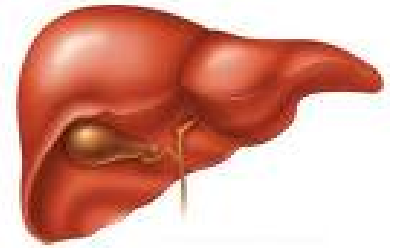
- Blood borne virus counsellors at a regional hospital were contacted by Department of Health to provide face to face counselling
- 39 year old woman with 3 children (aged 16, 13, 11) terminated a pregnancy in 2009 at Croydon clinic
- from a regional centre— drove a few hours to attend face to face counselling
- studying to be a nurse
- what does it mean if the results are negative?
- anxious & frightened about if the results were positive:
 - can she still be a nurse? ‘I won’t do nursing as I can’t bear to think about infecting someone else’
 - will her children get the virus
 - can she still have sexual relations and what impact does it have?

***Bushwacked:
dispelling myths**

Victorian Notifications of Hepatitis B

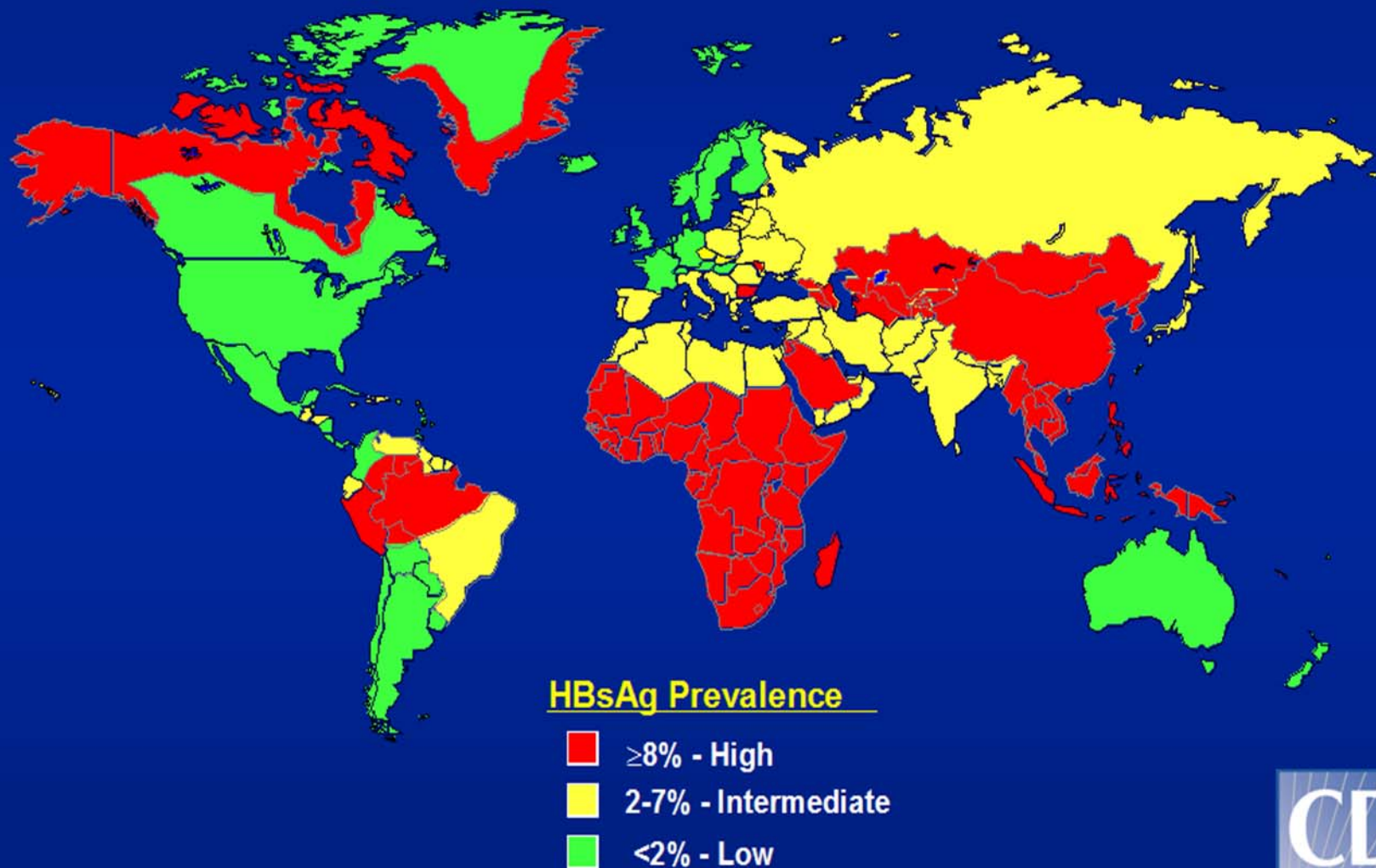
Geographical region	Hepatitis B notifications
North & West Metropolitan	903
Southern Metropolitan	454
Eastern Metropolitan	405
Barwon South Western	39
Gippsland	13
Loddon Mallee	48
Hume	22
Grampians	13

Did you know.....



- Hepatitis B is the most common liver infection in the world!
- Approximately 160,000 people infected with hepatitis B in Australia
- Between 1991 and 2005, there have been over 90,000 people diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B in Australia
- The majority of people with chronic hepatitis B in Australia were born overseas, predominantly in the Asia-Pacific region
- Refugees and migrants from the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America also have high rates of hepatitis B infection – why do you think this is so?

Geographic Distribution of Chronic HBV Infection



Disclosure of blood borne viruses

Instances where disclosure is legally required include:

- Upon joining federal services ie. navy, army
- Life insurance policies
- Health care workers performing exposure-prone procedure
- Donations of blood, blood products and body tissues

People with Hepatitis B, C and HIV are not obliged to disclose to anyone; this includes doctors, dentists, employers, social workers, counsellors, etc.

A Case of Confidential Mail

- 36 year old man with hepatitis B originally seen in a metropolitan clinic on trial medication which was suppressing the virus; he moved and his care was transferred to a rural clinic, where he was a patient for about 12 months.
- An address mix up occurred and his mail went to his old address, where his ex housemates continued to reside. He'd had a falling out with them.
- His mail was opened (not by him) and the appointment letter was for an infectious diseases clinic; the ex housemates assumed he had HIV and started spreading rumors and gossip that he was a 'poofdah'
- He was very anxious and did not want to attend further clinics, but because of the medication he was on, was unable to access it through the GP.
- Formal complaint processes were instigated with successful resolution and he happily remains a patient of the same rural clinic

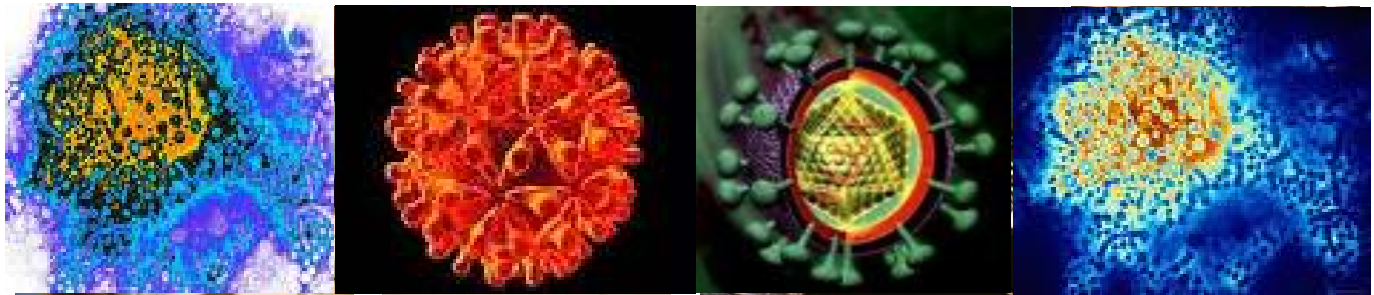
People are not legally permitted to open another persons mail!

Prevention with Standard Precautions.....

... are work practices required to achieve a basic level of infection control and include:

- Aseptic technique, including use of skin disinfectants
- Personal hygiene, including hand hygiene
- Personal protective equipment (PPE), gloves, aprons, gowns, goggles, masks and/or face shields
- Handling & disposal of sharps
- Reprocessing of reusable equipment/instruments &
 - use of disinfectants
- Environmental controls, including design & maintenance of premises and cleaning/spills management
- Provision of adequate support services - laundry, food

Thank You



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