

# Barriers to thalassaemia treatment from the healthcare provider's perspective

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Thalassaemia is a complex inherited blood disorder requiring life-long medical care and the high prevalence of thalassaemia in Malaysia is financially challenging to the public healthcare system. Thalassaemia patients largely seeks treatment in public healthcare facilities. This study aims to identify the barriers to thalassaemia treatment from the healthcare provider's perspective. **Methods:** Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were carried out in selected hospitals providing care to thalassaemia patients. Interviewees are generally from two groups, healthcare providers, that include key personnel working in providing care and treatment to patients either directly or indirectly. Participants were selected using maximum variation sampling with a focus on the expertise of participants. **Results:** A total of 12 participants were interviewed in five different states. Interviews conducted lasted on average 30 to 40 minutes each. Data saturation was achieved after eight subject interviews however, additional three participants were included to confirm the data saturation. Four types of barriers to providing thalassaemia care to patients were identified after an analysis of the transcription of the interviews. The themes are fund allocation, human resources, patient adherence and patient awareness. **Conclusion:** This study reveals the vital insight of health care providers' challenges in providing treatment to thalassaemia patients in public hospitals. The findings suggest a concerted effort to take active measures must be taken to ensure optimal healthcare delivery to thalassaemia patients in Malaysia.