



Flinders and Far North Division of General Practice

***Is there a role for
Aboriginal Health
Workers
assisting rural general
practice?***



Flinders and Far North Region



AHW in General Practices program

Background

- Flinders and Far North Division of GP is committed to supporting GPs working with Aboriginal people
- Model developed in consultation with GPs and their practices, Pika Wiya Health Service and the Aboriginal community

AHW in General Practices program

Model

To offer the services of an Aboriginal Health Worker to the 5 general practices in Port Augusta and one in practice in Quorn

- to increase the uptake of preventative health checks for Aboriginal people
- assist with making the GP services “culturally safe”

Preventative Health Checks

- Child Health Check - yearly
 - Age 0 -14 years
- Adult Health Check - every 2 years
 - Age 15 - 54 years
- Aged Health Assessment - yearly
 - Age 55 and over

Aboriginal Health Worker



AHW in General Practices program

Progress

- § service agreements
- § Aboriginal identification
- § resources for GPs and community
 - practice tools
 - promotion
- § health checks
- § ongoing evaluation and data collection
- § qualitative evaluation

Research and Evaluation

- Cultural Safety
- Data collection re health checks
- Value of the program -interviews

Cultural Safety

- Baseline:
 - Written questionnaire of GPs and practice staff's knowledge of Aboriginal issues
 - Cultural safety checklist for practices
- Ongoing:
 - Patient questionnaires

Cultural Safety

Results

Questionnaire for GPs and practice staff

- given to 16 staff at 6 practices
- showed a surprising lack of knowledge and some embarrassment from participants

Cultural Safety

Results

Checklist for practices

- used to educate practices about factors that may impact on Aboriginal people's access to services

Cultural Safety

Results

Patient Surveys

- 19 patients
- 70% felt comfortable attending the practices

Quantitative data collection

- Patients - numbers and demographics
- Health checks - type, venue, time taken, financial remuneration

Quantitative data collection

Results

Service agreements with 4 practices (3 used the AHW service)

About 630 eligible patients in these 3 practices

75 personally recruited by AHW

37 health checks undertaken by AHW

31 completed by GP

Quantitative data collection

Results

Of the 31 completed checks:

- twice as many females as males
- 17 Adult Health Checks, 14 Aged Assessments
- 4 were over 75 years so already eligible for Aged Assessment, 27 patients completed a health check because of the introduction of health checks for Aboriginal people.
- Half the Adult Checks and 2/3 of the Aged Assessments were done in the home.

Quantitative data collection

Results

For 31 completed checks:

Income generated for the practices:

\$6442.90

Payment to the Division (20% of Medicare):

\$1416.94

Qualitative Evaluation (after 12 months)

Semi-structured interviews of patients,
GPs and practice staff

Conducted by CCRE (Centre for Clinical Research
Excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Health)

Final Qualitative Evaluation

Results

5 patients interviewed -all of these

- ✓ found out about health checks from the AHW
- ✓ saw benefits for their health from the checks
- ✓ would recommend it to family and friends
- ✓ appreciated the involvement of the AHW because she had made them feel more comfortable when using private general practice
- ✓ wanted the program to continue, especially home visits

Final Qualitative Evaluation

Results

3 participating GPs and 2 practice staff were interviewed via phone for about 10 minutes

- ✓ Some value in the health checks but thought they didn't add much to existing general management of the patient.
- ✓ Inefficient process
- ✓ Needed more promotion in the community about health checks and general health education
- ✓ Health checks would be undertaken more with time

Recommendations

List of 16 recommendations for

- government and funders
- private practices
- future AHW in general practices programs

Role of the Flinders and Far North Division of General Practice

- Cultural Safety training of Division staff and practice staff
- Ongoing CST of GPs
- Training from Medicare Australia
- GP education for the Aboriginal community

Further information

Flinders and Far North

Division of General Practice

PO Box 18, Port Augusta, SA 5700

Ph: 8642 3166

Website: www.flindiv.com.au

Dr Julia Vnuk (GP Advisor, Aboriginal Health Program)

julia.vnuk@flindiv.com.au

Dean Stuart (Coordinator, Aboriginal Health Program)

dean.stuart@flindiv.com.au

Further information

Pika Wiya Health Service

PO Box 2021, Port Augusta, SA 5700

Ph: 8642 9999

Kathleen Willis (Aboriginal Health Worker)

kathleen.willis@health.sa.gov.au