**PAPER NUMBER #442**

**A systems based approach to improving evaluation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.**

**Presenting Authors**

Margaret Kelaher, Joanne Luke, Angeline Ferdinand and Daniel Chamravi

**Affiliation**

Centre for Health Policy University of Melbourne

**Country of residence**

Australia

**Objectives/aims**

Research and evaluation are recognised as essential aspects in improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health policy and practice. However, there is concern from community, evaluators and government that the evaluation of programs addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing do not always deliver promised benefits. This project aimed to develop a framework to guide future evaluation of health policies, programs and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

**Methods**

In order to develop an evaluation framework, a comprehensive review of peer-reviewed literature, evaluation reports and tender documents was conducted. All evaluation reports, tender documents and peer reviewed articles reports were reviewed with regards to bothethics and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research principles. The review period was from 2007-2017 it included 81 peer reviewed articles and 390 publicly advertised evaluations. The findings of the evaluation and a subsequent workshop informed the development of the framework.

**Main findings**

Only 5 per cent of tender documents and 33 per cent of evaluation reports were able to be obtained. All Australian governments have developed principles for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people however these are often not reflected in evaluations. In order to improve the benefits of evaluation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a 2-part evaluation framework was developed outlining *what* to evaluate and *how* to evaluate. The project highlights the importance of examining evaluative practice as a whole and identifying systemic barriers to its use in improving practice.