

# **PERSPECTIVES OF SERVICE PROVIDERS ABOUT DELIVERING SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES TO ABORIGINAL YOUNG PEOPLE**

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## **Background:**

Australia has high quality free clinical sexual health services. However Aboriginal peoples have a broader approach to health and wellbeing than just the clinical aspects. This Aboriginal-led research takes a strengths-based approach to identifying what service providers think of the current approach of sexual health service provision targeting Aboriginal young people in NSW.

## **Methods:**

Aboriginal led in-depth interviews with 19 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal service providers were conducted between June 2023 and February 2024. Participants worked in a variety of services and roles with a sexual health focus across NSW.

## **Results:**

Service providers discussed strengths and weakness with the current approach of sexual health service provision targeting Aboriginal young people in NSW. Participants identified they are constrained by the policies and systems which have a Sydney centric focus that fails to recognise the needs of the individual communities they work in. Other barriers include: a lack of Aboriginal staff, identified positions being defunded, a lack of appropriate and engaging health promotion material and having to prioritise testing. Participants recommended: improving how services work together to support clients, community engagement is prioritised, training and education pathways for Aboriginal workers are expanded and involving Aboriginal young people from across the state on advisory boards.

## **Conclusion:**

Service providers feel Aboriginal young people's clinical sexual health needs are being met, however they identified improvements that might better meet the needs of Aboriginal young people. Service providers also identified that Aboriginal young people are often excluded or overlooked from services consultation and advisory processes, resulting in their insights and suggestions being missed. Participants in the interviews welcomed the opportunity to hear what Aboriginal young people recommend to improve service delivery in NSW. As part of this research interviews are now being conducted with Aboriginal young people to gain their insights and experiences.

## **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The research is being conducted by an Aboriginal PhD candidate with an Aboriginal supervisor. An Aboriginal Advisory Group provides guidance and oversight. Ethics were secured from the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW.