

NOVEL INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS METHAMPHETAMINE USE IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES (NIMAC): USING EVIDENCE TO DRIVE ACTION ON METHAMPHETAMINE USE

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Introduction and Aims: There are few data available describing how methamphetamines are being used in Aboriginal communities nor evidence based approaches to prevention and treatment suitable for Aboriginal community contexts. Working with ten Aboriginal Health Services in urban, regional and remote locations, NIMAC aims to elucidate patterns of methamphetamine use and associated factors at individual and community levels; then to translate this knowledge into culturally appropriate interventions.

Methods: A cross sectional survey of recent users (last 12 months, 50% Aboriginal) is in progress (300 of 800 complete at the time of writing), alongside a series of focus groups with service providers, community members and current or past users in each site. Community coalitions, supported by researchers, will use this data to implement prevention-focused interventions in their communities, and health services are participating in the development and trial of an Aboriginal web-based therapeutic tool for methamphetamine dependence.

Results: Preliminary findings indicate that respondents most commonly smoke or inject methamphetamine in private homes and cover the spectrum of regular (daily or almost daily) to occasional (less than monthly) use. They generally feel connected to family and friends, but are disconnected from employment, education and health services, and experience high rates of psychological distress stemming from this and other sources including racism, grief and loss.

Discussion: This presentation will summarise NIMAC findings to date, providing insight into the unique sociocultural environment of methamphetamine use in Aboriginal communities, and outline the translational goals of the project moving forward.