

## **ADDRESSING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POPULATION INCIDENCE OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS - EXPLORING A SUCCESSFUL ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICE APPROACH**

**Background:** The Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities continue to be over represented in Australian notifications of STIs.

An audit was undertaken at Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BADAC) medical clinic in 2014 showing a low level of chlamydia and gonorrhoea testing in 15 – 29 year old age group. At this time the interface between medical software and quality reporting systems did not identify chlamydia and gonorrhoea screening.

**Methods / Strategies:** The clinic audit of ATSI clients showed results were considerably lower than anticipated as it was wrongly assumed testing would normally be suggested with every health check but results did not show this.

The most successful engagement occurred when ATSI clients attending the clinic for any reason were offered screening, utilising a whole of clinic systematic approach, combined with use of improved quality reporting systems to identify under screened clients.

The aim was to achieve a 30% annual screening rate as modelling shows that prevalence would then decrease rapidly over ten years.

**Results:** Intense team effort, driven by the practice nurses, resulted in significant results.

Testing for chlamydia and gonorrhoea increased from 10.9% during the audit year to 25% in the last 12 months. Testing for female community members increased for chlamydia and gonorrhoea increased from 21.5% during the audit year to 35% in the last 12 months.

Review processes developed as part of the initiative have also improved systems to follow through regarding positive result management  
Embedding systematic clinic processes has ensured that screening for chlamydia and gonorrhoea remains a priority for the ATSI clients.

**Conclusions:** A whole of practice approach at BADAC has proved successful in increasing chlamydia and gonorrhoea screening. The implementation of revised quality system reporting tools has ensured this work can successfully continue in general practice.