

SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS PRIMARY CARE SERVICES TO REDUCE THE HARMS FROM ALCOHOL

Kristie Harrison

Introduction / Issues: When unhealthy alcohol use is picked up early it can be much easier for the drinker to change. Most treatments for alcohol problems are not used often enough in primary care. This project involves supporting Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) to integrate evidence-based alcohol care practices in their culturally specific primary care models.

Method / Approach: The study will test, using a cluster randomised controlled trial, whether collaborative, whole-of-service support can lead to improved screening and treatment for unhealthy alcohol use (i.e. drinking above recommended limits, including dependence). In this talk we discuss measures taken to recruit services to this project. We also present preliminary findings of qualitative staff interviews. These interviews will inform the design of the support to be provided to ACCHSs.

Key Findings: The steps taken to recruit 22 ACCCHs around Australia will be described. Overview of analysis of staff interviews will include a description of perceived strengths of ACCHSs in working with alcohol, and perceived barriers (practical and attitudinal) that services or staff face. Staff recommendations for service support will be presented. Preliminary findings on screening rates will be presented.

Discussion and Conclusions: There is a lack of evidence on best approaches to provide alcohol care in ACCHSs. This project will add to the evidence base through two-way learning and capacity building approaches. Value will be placed on cultural care models and on the evidence base (which is currently largely mainstream). These two elements will be integrated, making use of the expertise of the services themselves.

Implications for Practice or Policy (optional): The research findings should provide a model for supporting other ACCHSs nationally, and a model for continuous quality improvement.