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Alcohol tobacco and other drug screening tools for pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those with chronic diseases or mental health concerns

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Background

- Alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use in pregnancy poses risks for maternal health, birth outcomes and child mortality among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples [1].
- Chronic disease and mental health challenges are prevalent due to ongoing disadvantages [2].
- Clinical ATOD screening tools identify at-risk clients/patients for intervention [3].
- This review explored tools for culturally safe screening in these populations.

Research Question

Which ATOD screening tools and intake assessments can be adapted for assessment in the following groups:

- Pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with chronic disease and/or mental health concern?

Method

Literature search

Medline, CINAHL, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Informit were searched, and 44 Australian organisations were contacted in March 2023

Literature selection

1,378 articles were screened
33 peer-reviewed articles and 10 grey literature documents met inclusion criteria

Data extraction

Data screened in duplicate and extracted

Results

Pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

- The AUDIT-C was most commonly used, with the ASSIST and AUDIT-C being preferred in the literature.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with chronic diseases or mental health concerns:

- The AUDIT, AUDIT-C, ASSIST, and IRIS were commonly utilised. In the literature, the IRIS and ASSIST screening tools were favoured.

Table 1: Summary of ATOD screening tools used with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Screening tool	Drug(s) targeted	Validated for use with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Recommended for use with: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with chronic diseases and/or mental health concerns
AUDIT	Alcohol	Yes	No	Yes
AUDIT-C	Alcohol	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tailored Surveys	Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Smoking Characteristics Survey	Tobacco	Yes	Yes	No
FTND	Tobacco	No	No	No
ASSIST	Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs	Yes	Yes	Yes
DUDIT	Other drugs	No	No	No
SASSI-3	Other drugs	No	No	No
IRIS	Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs	Yes	No	Yes
DAST-10	Substances besides alcohol	No	No	No

Conclusions

- To promote health equity for pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and those with chronic diseases and/or mental health concerns, culturally sensitive and valid screening tools are essential.
- Efforts should be made to screen in a culturally appropriate, non-judgmental manner to improve accuracy.
- Developing standardised screening methods with local community members, respecting cultural protocols, and integrating evidence-based strategies across primary healthcare settings are crucial.

Implications

- Findings can inform the adaptation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander screening tool focused on ATOD-related risk.
- Appropriate training and pilot testing should be undertaken before administering ATOD screening tools within these populations.

References: [1] Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Closing The Gap Report 2020. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia; 2020. [2] Povey J, et al. Systematic Reviews. 2021;10(1). [3] WHO. Screening programmes: a short guide. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2020.

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