

## **Preventive medical care for marginalized young people: demonstrating the impact of Youth Health services**

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### **Background:**

Evidence-based guidelines exist which demonstrate the impact of a range of preventive health activities on future health of adolescents and young adults. Marginalised and homeless youth generally experience poor health and face barriers to mainstream primary care. Little is known of the coverage of preventive healthcare in this group. The aim of this study was to determine the coverage of preventive health activity provision for clients attending a Youth Health service in a sociodemographically diverse region of western Sydney.

### **Methods:**

This was a retrospective audit of clinical records of a representative sample of young people who attended a medical or nursing clinic between August 2016 and December 2021. Data extracted from clinical records included sociodemographic characteristics and provision of 15 preventive health activities outlined by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Guidelines. Variations in preventive health activity provision by sociodemographic factor were investigated using chi-square analysis. Ethics approval was granted by the WSLHD Research Office.

### **Results:**

Over 500 clients were seen in the medical or nursing clinics over the study period. The sample for data extraction was systematically selected, giving a representative sample of 173 clients records for analysis. Of the 15 activities, nine were performed in over half of clients. HEADSS assessment was the most consistently performed activity, and Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM) screening was the only activity not performed. Of the 15 activities, only oral health screening, intimate partner violence screening and BMI varied by one or two sociodemographic factors.

### **Conclusions:**

The coverage of preventive health activity provision was high and largely equitable between sociodemographic and marginalised groups. Areas for improvement, including T2DM screening and vaccination catch-up, were identified. Overall, the nurse-led Youth Health model of care is effective for engaging underserved youth populations and delivering substantial preventive healthcare.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The authors recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.