

Alcohol and other drug treatment interventions for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds: A systematic review

Stella Settumba Stolk¹, Catherine Foley, Winifred Asare-Doku

¹*National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, UNSW Sydney, Sydney, Australia,*

Corresponding author: s.settumba.stolk@unsw.edu.au

Introduction: Almost 50% of Australians are of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background. CALD populations have unique identities and experiences of alcohol and other drug (AoD) use, with cultural differences, limited social supports, trauma, and experiences of stigma, being risk factors to AoD harms. Very little is known, however, about culturally sensitive AoD treatment interventions among this population in Australia. This review explored CALD specific AoD services in five English speaking countries as a means of informing development of CALD specific AoD treatment research, policy, and culturally sensitive practice in the Australian context.

Method: A Prisma-compliant systematic review of peer-reviewed research published between 2000 and 2023 was conducted. Four databases (Medline, PsycINFO, Embase, and CINAHL) were searched. Included studies examined, described, or evaluated AoD treatment interventions, services, or initiatives in CALD populations in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Canada, and United States of America.

Results: Preliminary results identified examples of CALD specific AoD service and treatment frameworks in other countries, but there was a lack of Australian studies. Frameworks in other countries highlighted the need to include consumer focused and co-designed service development, delivery, and evaluation approaches.

Discussions and Conclusions: Whilst new Australian AoD treatment guidelines recommend engagement with culture-specific agencies to improve treatment access and success, the guidelines do not include a comprehensive culturally appropriate framework for Australian service providers. With examples from other countries, this review highlights the need for a greater focus across treatment policy, research, and evaluation on AoD treatment in Australian CALD communities.

Implications for Practice or Policy: The National Drug Strategy 2017-2026 highlighted CALD as a key population at risk of AoD harm. This review will be used as a starting point to developing a co-designed CALD specific AoD service delivery framework aimed at increasing service access and creating an opportunity to treat physical and mental health comorbidities.