

# **Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Screening Tools for Mothers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Babies and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with Chronic Diseases or Mental Health Concerns**

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**Introduction / Issues:** There are limited alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) screening tools validated for use among pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults living with chronic disease or mental health concerns. This review explored existing tools to identify culturally safe approaches for screening in these populations.

**Method / Approach:** In March 2023, a comprehensive literature review on ATOD screening tools was conducted. Thirty-three peer-reviewed articles from five electronic databases and relevant grey literature was obtained through a desktop search, and engagement with Australian organisations.

**Key Findings:** The AUDIT-C was the most utilised tool for pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and the literature generally favoured the use of the ASSIST and AUDIT-C screening tools in this population. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults with chronic diseases or mental health concerns, the AUDIT, AUDIT-C, ASSIST, and IRIS were the most commonly used tools. The literature favoured the use of the IRIS and ASSIST screening tools within this population.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** To promote health equity for pregnant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults living with chronic diseases or mental health concerns, it is crucial to use culturally sensitive and valid screening tools. Efforts should also be made to screen in a culturally appropriate and non-judgmental manner to improve screening accuracy. Developing standardised screening methods in collaboration with local community members, respecting cultural protocols, and integrating evidence-based strategies across primary healthcare settings are crucial.

**Implications for Practice or Policy:** Policy makers can use these findings to 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.

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