

# Aboriginal Ear Disease

Rural Health West

Aboriginal Health Conference

20<sup>th</sup> November 2021

# Traditional owners of country Acknowledgement



- I would like to show my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, of elders past, present and emerging, on which this event takes place.

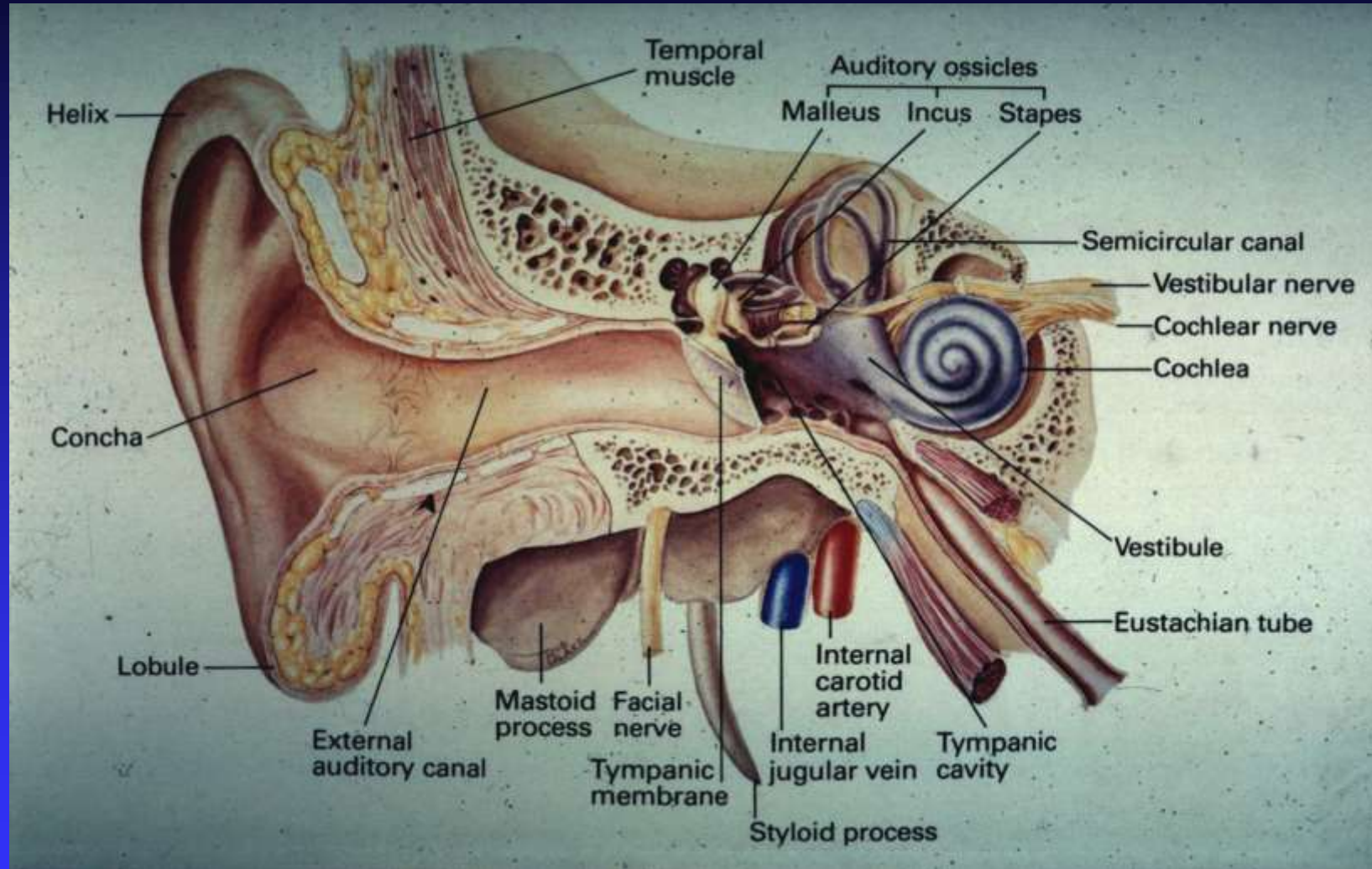
# Middle ear disease

- Affects up to 97% of children before age 5
- Affects 20% of preschool children in daycare at any given time.

**IT IS VERY COMMON – ALMOST NORMAL!**

# Aetiology

THE KEY to childhood middle ear disease is *EUSTACHIAN TUBE DYSFUNCTION*



# Causes of ET dysfunction

- Anatomy – maturational.
- Infection: Early nasopharyngeal colonization with pathogenic bacteria, viral URTI
- Adenoidal hypertrophy.
- Allergy.
- Cranio-facial anomaly e.g. cleft palate, Crouzon.
- Tumour e.g. JNA.
- Trauma e.g. post surgical.



# Prevention of otitis media

## Risk factors

### Aboriginal children

- Access to adequate housing
- Lack of running water
- Overcrowding
- Inadequate nutrition
- Hygiene issues
- Land rights





# Findings at initial evaluation of Aboriginal children in Kwinana

- Normal 35 (37.7%)
- Abnormal 58 (62.3%)
  - unilateral o.m.e. 6 (6.4%)
  - bilateral o.m.e. 29 (31.2%)
  - unilateral CSOM 16 (17.2%)
  - bilateral CSOM 7 (7.5%)
- Only 2 children had previously received Specialist treatment.

# Ear Health Team

- Aboriginal Health Worker
- Local Coordinator
- Clinic Nurse
- Community Doctor
- Audiologist
- Otolaryngologist

# Child Health Team

- Paediatrician
- Speech Pathologist
- Play Therapist
- Early Child Education
- ?Other appropriate

- Collaboration is key
- Flexibility of team members
- Creative use of local resources to facilitate multiple service access opportunities on one visit
- Not always necessary to re-invent the wheel – good models exist

- Possible to explore other options to maximise benefit from current visits
- This is a possible way to bypass current unacceptable waits for services
- These must be linked to appropriate surgical services provided as locally to the community as feasible
- South Metro Ear Health Programme has been working along this pathway
- Work locally together – Look and think State-wide and Nationwide

THANK YOU

What do you think?