

# Talking About the Smokes: A large-scale, community-based participatory research project

Couzos, S., Nicholson, A.K., Hunt, J., Davey, M.E., May, J.K., Bennet, P.T., Westphal, D.W., & Thomas, D.P.

## **Abstract**

**Objective:** To describe the Talking About The Smokes (TATS) project according to the World Health Organization guiding principles for conducting community-based participatory research (PR) involving indigenous peoples, to assist others planning large-scale PR projects.

**Design, setting and participants:** The TATS project was initiated in Australia in 2010 as part of the International Tobacco Control Policy Evaluation Project, and surveyed a representative sample of 2522 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults to assess the impact of tobacco control policies. The PR process of the TATS project, which aimed to build partnerships to create equitable conditions for knowledge production, was mapped and summarised onto a framework adapted from the WHO principles.

**Main outcome measures:** Processes describing consultation and approval, partnerships and research agreements, communication, funding, ethics and consent, data and benefits of the research.

**Results:** The TATS project involved baseline and follow-up surveys conducted in 34 Aboriginal community-controlled health services and one Torres Strait community. Consistent with the WHO PR principles, the TATS project built on community priorities and strengths through strategic partnerships from project inception, and demonstrated the value of research agreements and trusting relationships to foster shared decision making, capacity building and a commitment to Indigenous data ownership.

**Conclusions:** Community-based PR methodology, by definition, needs adaptation to local settings and priorities. The TATS project demonstrates that large-scale research can be participatory, with strong Indigenous community engagement and benefits.

## **Recommended Citation**

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