

Tobacco control policies and activities in Aboriginal community-controlled health services

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Abstract

Objectives: To describe tobacco control policies and activities at a nationally representative sample of Aboriginal community-controlled health services (ACCHSs).

Design, Setting and Participants: The Talking About The Smokes (TATS) project used a quota sampling design to recruit 34 ACCHSs around Australia. Between April 2012 and October 2013, a representative at each ACCHS completed a survey about the service's tobacco control policies and activities. Questions about support for smoke-free policies were also included in the TATS project survey of 2435 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the communities served by the ACCHSs.

Main Outcome Measures: ACCHS tobacco control policies and activities.

Results: Thirty-two surveys were completed, covering 34 sites. Most ACCHSs (24/32) prioritised tobacco control "a great deal" or "a fair amount", and all services had smoke-free workplace policies. Most had staff working on tobacco control and had provided tobacco control training within the past year. A range of quit-smoking information and activities had been provided for clients and the community, as well as extra smoking cessation support for staff. There was strong support for smoke-free ACCHSs from within the Aboriginal communities, with 87% of non-smokers, 85% of ex-smokers and 77% of daily smokers supporting a complete ban on smoking inside and around ACCHS buildings.

Conclusions: The high level of commitment and experience within ACCHSs provides a strong base to sustain further tobacco control measures to reduce the very high smoking prevalence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

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