

# Smoking among a national sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health service staff

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## **Abstract**

**OBJECTIVE:** To examine smoking among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff of Aboriginal community-controlled health services (ACCHSs).

**DESIGN, SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS:** The Talking About The Smokes (TATS) project surveyed 374 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at a national sample of 31 ACCHSs, from April 2012 to October 2013. We made comparisons with adult participants in the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) and with 1643 smokers in a community sample of 2522 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also surveyed in the TATS project.

**MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES:** Smoking status, smoking behaviour at work, quitting behaviour, attitudes and beliefs about smoking and quitting.

**RESULTS:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ACCHS staff had a lower smoking prevalence than among all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults surveyed in the NATSISS (38% v 49.8%), but this difference was smaller when compared with only employed adults (38% v 44.8%). Staff smokers had higher odds than smokers in their communities of ever trying to quit (odds ratio [OR], 2.1; 95% CI, 1.1-3.7), of having often noticed anti-smoking advertising (OR, 2.8; 95% CI, 1.4-5.6), and of having used stop-smoking medications (OR, 3.0; 95% CI, 1.6-5.7), often with the support of their ACCHS. There was a significant association ( $P < 0.001$ ) between the smoking status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and their confidence in talking to others about smoking and quitting; ex-smokers were most likely to report being confident. Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who smoked (74%) agreed that being a non-smoker sets a good example to patients at their health service, and most did not smoke with patients or at work where patients could see them.

**CONCLUSION:** Smoking prevalence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ACCHS staff is only modestly lower than among other employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Given that ex-smokers feel more confident to help others quit than any other group, smoking cessation in ACCHS staff is a useful contributor to reducing community smoking rates.

## **Recommended Citation**

Thomas, D.P., Davey, M.E., Panaretto, K.S., Hunt, J.M., Stevens, M., & Van der Sterren, A.E. (2015). Smoking among a national sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health service staff. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 202 (10), 85-89.

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