



Improving Aboriginal Kidney Care Together

What is the challenge?

Many Aboriginal people across South Australia experience Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) as a complication of diabetes and heart disease, requiring regular dialysis and specialist care. Kidney disease occurs at younger ages, and is more prevalent for Aboriginal people in rural and remote areas. Often people leave their homes and families to receive care in larger towns and cities. They navigate numerous appointments across disjointed sections of the health system, while experiencing communication, accommodation, transport and financial challenges, all while being displaced from their families. In addition, Aboriginal people from urban, rural and remote settings may or may not have opportunities to fully discuss and fully understand the nature of their health condition and options for treatment. Health professionals in kidney health, dialysis and primary care services strive to provide quality care for this client group but are often challenged in knowing how best to achieve this within the current health system.

About this research translation project

This collaborative action research project brings together Aboriginal kidney patients, family members, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health professionals, health services, academics, researchers and other stakeholders to identify gaps and develop strategies to improve kidney care in South Australia. Aboriginal renal patients are positioned as Reference Group members and co-researchers who have unique knowledge and experiences. Health professionals and managers bring understanding of health systems and how strategies might be most effectively implemented, and academics guide the research process and assist nursing, medical and allied health students to better understand how to provide culturally safe care.

Community consultations and focus groups will be held in Adelaide and Port Augusta to enable Aboriginal patients, their family and community members to highlight their kidney care needs and priorities. Emerging themes will inform local and state health services, and new National Guidelines for Management of CKD for Indigenous people in Australia and New Zealand.



Aboriginal patients and family members will be invited to share individual kidney care experiences, which will be written as de-identified patient journeys case studies. With permission, these will be shared with health professionals and students to identify gaps and strategies in clinical and culturally safe care. An implementation working group will identify how improvements can be embedded into everyday care.

The themes, priorities and strategies emerging from each of these activities will be identified and discussed at an open kidney care workshop. Community reports and newsletters will be provided throughout the project, to enable community and key stakeholder feedback. Videos will be produced for use in community, health care and university settings.

What will be the impact?

By bringing together the perspectives of patients, their families and communities, health professionals, academics, and researchers, this project will identify, develop and embed pragmatic improvements in kidney health care in South Australia. Positioning Aboriginal patients as Reference Group members and co-researchers enhances Indigenous governance and community involvement health care delivery. This will enable us all to better meet the needs of this important client group.

Project contact details

Project Title Improving Aboriginal Kidney Care Together
The University of Adelaide

Project Lead Dr Janet Kelly
E janet.kelly@adelaide.edu.au
P 0428 891 286

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