

Now more than ever ... a tool for assessing primary health care systems support for health promotion

Nikki Clelland¹

¹Menzies School of Health Research

Background

There is increasing pressure on health systems to re-orient towards principles of primary health care and health promotion. However, mechanisms for achieving this reorientation are not well established.

As part of a continuous quality improvement approach, we have developed a tool to systematically assess the extent to which primary health care centre systems support health promotion. Health centre teams use the tool to explore components of their health centre systems and subsequently develop practical strategies to achieve organisational improvements in order to support their health promotion practice.

Data gathered and methods used

A review of the literature identified factors associated with organisational capacity and infrastructure necessary for supporting health promotion. These factors were compiled and mapped against components in the existing ABCD Systems Assessment Tool (SAT). We have also worked with health centre teams from participating services and key stakeholders to further refine the SAT for health promotion. We have collected data on the strengths and weaknesses of systems to support health promotion through facilitated workshops with health teams in four Indigenous primary health care centres.

Results and conclusions

The SAT has assisted in facilitating and describing system changes at the local health centre level related to health promotion, including community linkages and participation, partnerships, workforce development and systems for planning and monitoring health promotion initiatives. Workforce capacity and the acute care demands on health centre staff are ongoing challenges to the further development of supportive health centre systems for effective health promotion practice.