

HSRAANZ Webinar Series

What Keeps You Strong? Contributing to a Research Program Aimed at Supporting the Wellbeing of Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

16 November 2015 11:30am (AEST)

Dr Carol Davy, Senior Research Fellow, South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute

There is no cost to attend the Webinar but registration is essential. Please register at:

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Abstract

What Keeps You Strong? Contributing to a Research Program Aimed at Supporting the Wellbeing of Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Despite poorer health status and higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage, statistics show that on average, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are less likely to use aged care services, in comparison to their non-Indigenous counterparts. Improving understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and the factors that support concepts of wellbeing is likely to support greater engagement with such services.

The aim of this research program is to develop a model of care which will assist primary healthcare and aged care services to support the wellbeing of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The program began with a large systematic literature review which identified interventions and strategies that have or could improve the wellbeing of older Indigenous peoples internationally.

The results of this review suggested that Indigenous identity was central to wellbeing for many Indigenous peoples. Crucial to maintaining Indigenous identity was a sense of independence, whereby older Indigenous people are able to contribute to and remain active members of their community. As physical independence often diminishes with age, having the support of culturally safe primary healthcare and aged care services that understand the importance of maintaining an Indigenous identity and also cater for the particular needs of Indigenous peoples was also found to be important. Given the number of Indigenous peoples who have been impacted by assimilation policies, services that also support Indigenous peoples to reconnect with their culture, community and family may be particularly crucial.

Carol Davy has had over 12 years' experience in using both qualitative and quantitative methods to better understand the health needs of particular populations. Carol's PhD completed in 2009 utilised a social psychology methodology to better understand the role that belief systems such as the biomedical model, Indigenous knowledge and religion played in informing and guiding primary health care service provision and utilisation.

Currently, Carol is working on a number of programs related to primary and aged care services at Wardliparingga Aboriginal Research Unit, South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute. As Senior Research Fellow, Carol is helping to lead the work conducted by the Centre of Research Excellence in Aboriginal Chronic Disease Knowledge Translation and Exchange (CREATE) and "What Keeps You Strong" a program of work which aims to support the wellbeing of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. She is also involved in a study which developed a Wellbeing Framework for use in primary healthcare services and has developed a suite of master classes which aim to strengthen the research capacity of staff working in the Aboriginal healthcare sector. Carol is a recipient of the 2015 Health Services Research and Policy Fellowship.

Prior to completing her PhD, Carol worked closely with the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research on a variety of projects, including developing and managing a study which aimed to measure both the patient and health systems costs of treating malaria, in addition to the potential savings which may be recognized if a preventative malaria program was implemented. Dr Carol Davy has also worked at the University of Adelaide where she was an investigator on the Middle East Area of Operations Health Studies, and senior researcher responsible for the Middle East Area of Operations Prospective Study.

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