

**Aboriginal health**  
**Case 3- Jimmy**

**click to read the case of Jimmy**

This case illustrates many of the health problems found in aboriginal people. It also demonstrates the important role of health promotion and how it differs from other populations in Australia

Learning objectives:

- To be aware of the profile of health problems often found in the Aboriginal population
- To be aware of the broader determinants of health in relation to Aboriginal people and about community development approaches to health promotion
- To know when and how to apply the National guide to a preventative assessment in Aboriginal people
- To be able to screen for unrecognized disease, early detection of existing disease and provide relevant health promotion through risk factor reduction in an Aboriginal population

*Jimmy is a 57 yr old married man, a timber worker, who originally came from the Oyster Cove area. His wife, Bron works in the fish factory at Electra. They have raised 3 kids now 37, 35 and 33 and they have 6 grandkids. They have a tight knit extended family.*

*Jimmy usually attends the Aboriginal Health Centre in Hobart but has come to live near your rural practice 40km south of Hobart . He has cut his hand on a power tool and comes to have it assessed and get a tetanus injection. You discover he consumes 10 cans of beer on the weekends but none during the week. He is a smoker and has type 2 diabetes. His BMI is 27. He has recently had a 'small heart attack' but feels OK now. There have been some worries over his possibility of being retrenched from his job.*

Issues to consider:

You decide to perform an ATSI Adult Health check Medicare Item 710. What does this involve?

Find out more here:

<http://www.racgp.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/About/Faculties/AboriginalandTorresStraitIslanderHealth/Resources/>

*You discover a number of lifestyle factors which are promoting disease. How would the Lifescripts program assist you to facilitate the patient to change his lifestyle?*

See: <http://www.health.gov.au/lifescrpts>

Are there any special considerations when providing health care to indigenous people?

How would you ensure *cultural safety*?

## **Further reading (Essential):**

### **1. National guide to a preventive assessment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples**

The National guide to a preventive health assessment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is an initiative of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and was prepared by NACCHO as lead agency with the Chronic Disease Alliance (CDA) of Non-Government Organisations. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners supported the development of this guide.

The National guide assists GPs and primary health care providers to provide a comprehensive preventive health assessment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and adults. In recognition of the specific and often unique health concerns of this population, the guide assists in screening for unrecognised disease, early detection of existing disease and health promotion through risk factor reduction.

<http://www.racgp.org.au/guidelines/nationalguide>

1. 2. An excellent web link for health promotion in aboriginal communities can be found at:

<http://www.healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/health-resources/promotion-resources>

This is from the Australian Indigenous Health/InfoNet (<http://www.healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/>) an innovative web resource that makes knowledge and information on Indigenous health easily accessible to inform practice and policy. This web resource is a 'one-stop info-shop' for people interested in improving the health of Indigenous Australians. It provides quality, up-to-date knowledge and information about many aspects of Indigenous health, and support 'yarning places' (electronic networks) that encourage information-sharing and collaboration among people working in health and related sectors.

3. This page from the UTas web site on *Indigenous Health* provides important information on indigenous historical and cultural experiences. It includes a useful Powerpoint on cultural safety and an out line of the Cultural Awareness Program run by Clyde Mansell a Tasmanian aboriginal man who has delivered this highly rated training to GP registrars in Tasmania over the past 7 yrs:

<http://www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au/indigenous-health/hist-cult-info-4-1.htm>

#### **Appendix 1. Definitions of Cultural safety:**

# What is Cultural safety?

- Cultural awareness – the understanding that there is difference, also the understanding of the context in which people exist
- Cultural sensitivity – legitimising this difference, a process of self exploration that enables us to see how our own life experiences impact upon others
- Cultural safety – safe service, as defined by those who receive the service

Ramsden

# What is Cultural safety?

“An environment that is safe for people, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about **shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening**”

Williams