




Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health assessments

By Dr Karen Nicholls

There is a disproportionate burden of disease for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples compared with other Australians. Engaging Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in their health care can assist with risk factor modification and management of chronic disease. The approach needs to be both consultative and holistic within the health beliefs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The 715 Health Assessment is a tool to assist with identifying the patient's priorities and concerns, as well as identifying risk factors and allowing a more holistic approach to the patient care. The aim of the 715 Health Assessment (more commonly known as the health check) is to help ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people receive primary health care that best meets their needs, by supporting their health and wellbeing and facilitating early detection, diagnosis and intervention for common and treatable conditions. If done properly, the 715 Health Assessment can be a very powerful tool for engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients in their health care.

TEACHING AND LEARNING AREAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concept of health • Identification of patient's health goals/needs • Medicare Benefits Schedule - Item 715 description • Annual Health Assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People • MBS Item 10987 - access to Medicare rebates for follow up services provided by a practice nurse or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner following a health assessment • MBS items 81300 to 81360 - access to Medicare rebates for services provided by allied health following a health assessment 				
PRE- SESSION ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the RACGP resource Useful high-quality MBS item 715 health checks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people • Undertake the Medicare Australia Indigenous health checks e-learning module • Review a 715 assessment that has already been performed and discuss if it is of high quality 				
SESSION ACTIVITIES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss practice approach to arranging health assessments – role of PN, booking policy (may require more than one appointment) • Discuss consent - must be obtained to undertake a health assessment • Review 715 assessment template • Discuss the need for a comprehensive family and social history – important for full understanding of the patient's perspective and context • Discuss culturally appropriate screening tools for chronic disease e.g. screening for cardiovascular risk in young people • Review the National Guide to a preventative health assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to inform preventive activities 				
RESOURCES 	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Read</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP resource Telehealth – considerations for an effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health check • Services Australia webpage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health assessments and follow-up services • Medicare Australia Your guide to Medicare for Indigenous health services </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Watch</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP 715 health check webinar </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP resource Telehealth – considerations for an effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health check • Services Australia webpage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health assessments and follow-up services • Medicare Australia Your guide to Medicare for Indigenous health services 	Watch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP 715 health check webinar
Read	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP resource Telehealth – considerations for an effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health check • Services Australia webpage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health assessments and follow-up services • Medicare Australia Your guide to Medicare for Indigenous health services 				
Watch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RACGP 715 health check webinar 				
FOLLOW UP & EXTENSION ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform a 715 assessment with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patient and review afterwards with the supervisor 				