Talking Story

A coordinated approach to Aboriginal children’s ear health

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Why am I telling this story?

- 2010 - Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service RMO
- 2015 - Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia (AHCSA) Registrar
- Involvement in ear health project and the South Australian Aboriginal Ear Health Reference Group
- Many children’s stories unchanged (Jervis-Bardy, Sanchez et al. 2014)
Methods

• Literature review
• Review of coordinated state-wise approaches
• Stakeholder consultation and workshop
• State ear health Framework development
• Indicators for evaluation of Framework
• Stakeholder review and publication
Healthy Ears – Healthy Life

• Ear health contributes to overall well-being

“Learning your language and hearing your stories from your old people and your family is really important in keeping your culture alive”

-Georgina Williams, Kaurna Elder

Causes and consequences of ear disease

• Strong socio-economic determinants of ear disease
• Preventable condition
• Education
• Employment
Types of disease

- Acute Otitis Media
- Otitis Media with Effusion
- Chronic Suppurative Otitis Media

*Pictures provided by Dr N. Spurrier*
Prevalence of ear disease

Remote Aboriginal children
Aged 5-12\(^1\) with TM perforation: 37%
Hearing test fail Uni/bi laterally: 55.6-66.3%

Metro Aboriginal children
Aged 5-12\(^1\) with TM perforation: around 1%
Hearing test fail Uni/bi laterally: 13.9-33%
Aged 0-8\(^2\) with Hearing test fail uni/bi laterally: 21%

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State-wise coordinated activities

- **NT** – Child Health Check Initiative and follow up (we know what the problems are; let’s fix them)
  - Hearing Health Coordinator program
- **NSW** – Government - screening is not enough
- **QLD** - ‘Deadly Ears’ – a large annual budget
South Australian services

• Aboriginal Health Council of SA Ear Health Project- supports Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
• General practice and public surgical services
• Newborn and Children’s Hearing Service
• NGOs
Current initiatives for Aboriginal children

- State **Closing The Gap** funding for ‘Under Fives’ Watto Purrunna
- Rural Doctors Workforce Agency outreach – part of Commonwealth **Better Hearing - Better Listening**
The process of Framework development

- SA Aboriginal Ear Health Reference Group identified need for written plan
- Literature review and background paper
- Workshop - June 2015 – around 30 attendees
- Individual consultations
- Plan for stakeholder review, endorsement
Principles of Framework Development

• Aboriginal governance and community involvement
• Prevention focus
• Advocacy
• Early and effective intervention
• Statewide care
• Evaluation

Recommendations for clinical care guidelines on the management of otitis media in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Populations (April 2010)
Service mapping

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**Role of agency or service**
- Service Provision
  - DHA Aboriginal EHW
  - CYH Child Health Clinic
  - ACCHS
  - RDWA
  - Newborn & children's hearing
  - Under 5s
  - Audiology
  - WCH & FMC
  - Audiology Flinders Uni
  - SAAHN Aboriginal Families Clinic
  - Prison Health
  - DECD
  - CRC
  - RDWA
  - Australian Hearing
  - WCH and FMC ENT

**Program Support**
- DHA PHPB
- AHCSA
- PHNS
- DHA PHPB
- DECD SERU

**Policy/Governance**
- SAAEHRG
- Universities
- SAAEHRG
- Universities
- SAAEHRG

**Fund-holders**
- DHA CTG funding
- RDWA
- DHA CTG funding
- RDWA

**Level of prevention addressed**
- Primary Prevention
- Secondary Prevention
- Tertiary Prevention
Consensus on what is needed

- Follow-up across continuum of care
- Identifying and replicating successes
- Directing funding to need
The moral of the story

- Already positive outcomes through talking about the story of ear health
- Rural Doctors Workforce Agency collaborative approach
- Engagement with Department for Education and Child Development
- Affirmation of SA Health successes
- Telling a new story
References

• COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA 2011b. Recommendations for clinical care guidelines on the management of otitis media in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Populations (April 2010)


