

Media Release – Latest review says sustainable action is needed to address the eye health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

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The Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (HealthInfoNet) at Edith Cowan University has published a new *Review of eye health among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*. It provides detailed information on eye conditions, including the three leading causes of vision loss and blindness among Indigenous adults which are uncorrected or under-corrected refractive error, cataract and diabetic retinopathy.

The 2018 review highlights the need for sustainable action to address the eye health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Between 2008 and 2016, some measures of eye health, including the prevalence of blindness, spectacle coverage rate and cataract surgery rate, appear to have improved, however, significant gaps remain across all measures when comparing the eye health of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The review highlights that the prevalence of vision loss has remained unchanged between 2008 and 2016, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing a three-fold higher rate of low vision compared with non-Indigenous people. The data informing this come largely from the 2008 National Indigenous Eye Health Survey and 2016 National Eye Health Survey.

HealthInfoNet Director, Professor Neil Drew says 'The review, which is part of our suite of knowledge exchange tools, was written by Hessom Razavi from the Lions Eye Institute and HealthInfoNet research staff, Sam Burrow and Avinna Trzesinski. The review states that although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people generally begin life with better vision than the rest of the Australian community, this reverses by adulthood so continuing action on eye health issues will lead to better outcomes'.

Link to review <https://healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/learn/health-facts/reviews-knowledge-exchange-products/>

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About the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet: The HealthInfoNet, www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au, is a massive Internet resource that informs practice and policy in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health by making up to date research and other knowledge readily accessible via any platform. In this way, it contributes to closing the gap in health between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. For over 21 years, working in the area of knowledge exchange with a population health focus, the HealthInfoNet has made research and other information freely available in a form that has immediate, practical utility for practitioners and policy-makers in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, enabling them to make decisions based on the best available evidence.