

Latest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status information now available

23 March 2022

The Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet has released the latest version of their annual authoritative publication, the [Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status 2021](#)

There is a featured section on the Coronavirus disease and its impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities. During the pandemic, health authorities have reinforced that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at greater risk but have praised the response of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations in delivering strong evidence based and culturally responsive prevention initiatives.

The release of the key findings from the Australian Burden of Disease Study 2018 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people provides promising news for specific diseases. There was a decline in total burden for coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, rheumatoid arthritis, hearing loss and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Improvements in birth and pregnancy outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and babies continue, with evidence of an increase in the proportion of mothers attending antenatal care in the first trimester (increased from 49% in 2012 to 67% in 2019), a decrease in the rate of mothers smoking during pregnancy, and a slight decrease in the proportion of babies born small for gestational age. The national target for childhood immunisation has been met for 5 year olds with 97% coverage.

Of all specific causes of death, ischaemic heart disease was the leading cause of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in NSW, Qld, WA, SA and the NT combined in 2020. Injury was the leading cause of hospitalisation in 2019-20 (excluding dialysis).

HealthInfoNet Director, Professor Neil Drew, said “Our annual authoritative *Overview* is a comprehensive evidenced based resource for those working in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector. The overall data shows it is critical to also address environmental health factors - such as housing and hygiene- that underpin the spread of many infectious diseases.”

As part of the HealthInfoNet’s commitment to knowledge exchange, a plain language infographic Summary version of the *Overview*’s key topics has been produced with PowerPoint slides of the key points.

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More information: The HealthInfoNet is a comprehensive 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. It contributes to closing the gap in health between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. For over 24 years, working in the area of knowledge exchange with a population health focus, the HealthInfoNet makes 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.
www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au