

Understanding the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic kidney disease during the COVID-19 pandemic



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Background

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia face significant disparities in health outcomes.¹
- COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020 by the World Health Organisation.²
- The mortality rate from COVID-19 was 1.6 times higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people compared to other Australians.³
- The research addresses a significant gap in the literature.

Aim

To gain insight into the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic kidney disease during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

Qualitative descriptive methodology

- Primary research method is semi-structured interviews in a yarning style.
- Patient Journey Mapping was utilised to illustrate results and each participant's individual journey.
- These research methods privilege the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.⁴
- The chosen research method enabled the primary researcher and participants to build a trusting relationship and discuss topics relevant to the participants and clinician researcher.⁴

Results

- Inductive thematic analysis was used to identify three main themes:

- Experiences and perceptions of the COVID-19 vaccination
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on daily life
- Experiences of contracting COVID-19



Strengths and limitations of study approaches

Strengths

- In-depth understanding and comprehensive analysis of the data
- Rich data-set, leading to valuable insights
- Ethical considerations able to be addressed more easily such as minimising harm, confidentiality and informed consent
- Provides a way for participants to share their stories

Limitations

- Limited generalisability
- Reduced transferability

Recommendations

- Change to institutional policy is needed
- Need for streamlined and consistent, culturally sensitive education
- Prioritising mental-health and wellbeing of socially isolated patients
- Implementation of community outreach and education programs
- Proposed telehealth and technology education programs for healthcare professionals

Conclusion

- The research study offers valuable insights into the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with chronic kidney disease during COVID-19.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with chronic kidney disease faced many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Challenges included vaccine hesitancy and the impact of restrictions on cultural practices and community connections.
- Some suggestions to combat these challenges for future pandemics included the implementation of community outreach and education programs and prioritising the culturally sensitive education delivery.
- This is an area that would benefit from further research.

References

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