

## Piloting a culturally appropriate, localised diabetes prevention program for young Aboriginal people in a remote town

Trying out a new program for young people to help stop diabetes happening

### Why was this study done?

Big research studies overseas showed that healthy eating and being active can stop type 2 diabetes from happening. In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have more type 2 diabetes than non-Indigenous Australians, especially in younger age groups. Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services can be good places to run programs that help people do more healthy things. The Derby Aboriginal Health Service was involved in making a new program for young Aboriginal people, using the ideas and advice of community members. We looked carefully at what happened when we tried the program and what people thought of it, to see if the program could keep going.

### How was this study done?

We tried the program for the first time at the end of 2017. We asked some people aged 15–25 to do the program, and other people aged in their 30s did the program as well (program participants). The program went for 8 weeks, for an hour or two every week. It was at DAHS in the reception area, after the clinic had shut for the day. The program had a group exercise circuit with hip-hop/rap music, outdoor cooking, healthy snacks, and talking about why it's good to do healthy things and how to do it. There was a program for men run by a local Aboriginal man, and a program for women run by a local Aboriginal woman (program facilitators). We talked to these program facilitators about their views on running the program and got their ideas for the future. We asked the program participants what they thought of the program, and found out whether they had made any healthy changes because of the program.

### What did we find out?

Program participants said the program motivated them to make some healthy changes. They learnt new information, like how much sugar is in different drinks and the bad things that diabetes can do to the body. Participants made changes such as stopping or slowing down on cool drink and juice, cooking healthy food at home more, and eating smaller amounts. Participants liked doing things in a group, and it was good having program facilitators who were local Aboriginal people and very supportive. It was hard for people to come to the program every week because they had other things on. In the future we would advertise the program more and run it at a time of year that is not so busy. It was hard to set this program up but now it could keep being run if it had funding. In the meantime, bits of the program are being used by DAHS as part of their other activities.

### What does this mean?

Aboriginal health services like DAHS are very busy and it would be good if they had more resources to help people stay healthy as well as helping people when they are sick. This program was a good starting point, but programs go better when they keep running again and again, and people can join in when they are ready. Programs like this don't have to be run by health professionals. The main thing is that the facilitator makes people feel comfortable and can explain things. It's good having someone from the same culture and age group as participants.

### Publication:

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