Closing the Indigenous health gap & evaluation: getting it right and making an impact

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Overview

- Evidence in Indigenous health policy
- ‘Getting it right’ & ‘making an impact’
- Take home messages
The Policy Agenda

- On the 24th of March 2008 the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, the leader of the federal opposition and significant leaders in the health sector signed a pledge to:

  - Close the Indigenous health gap by 2030
  - Close the equity gap in health service provision by 2018
Council of Australian Governments Targets

- Close the life expectancy gap in a generation
- Halve the child mortality gap in 10 years
- Halve the literacy and numeracy gap
- Halve the gap in employment outcomes within a decade
- Halve the gap for Indigenous students in year 12 by 2020
- In 5 years all Indigenous four year olds in remote Indigenous communities will have access to quality early childhood education program
National Indigenous Health Agreement

The Agreement focused on five priority areas:

- tackling smoking,
- providing a healthy transition to adulthood,
- making Indigenous health everyone’s business,
- delivering effective primary health care services and
- better coordinating the patient journey through the health system.
The Indigenous Chronic Disease Package aims to reduce key risk factors for chronic disease in the Indigenous community such as smoking, improve chronic disease management and follow up, and increase the capacity of the primary care workforce to deliver effective care to Indigenous Australians with chronic diseases.
Chronic Diseases Package: Overview

- The package provides funding for:
  - preventative health focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities;
  - coordinated and patient-focused primary health care in both Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and mainstream general practice;
  - Workforce expansion.
The Framework for the ICDP was designed to:

- guide the ongoing monitoring and implementation of the ICDP measures from 2009/10 to 2012/13
- inform an independent Package-wide evaluation of the ICDP to be completed in 2012/13
- guide the work of the Sentinel Sites project (a formative and place-based analysis of the ICDP at a local level) and individual measure evaluations
- inform policy and planning on closing the gap in Indigenous health.
Chronic Diseases Package: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

- Program Logic
  - Aims
  - Outputs Year One and Ongoing
  - Early Results (Years 2-4)
  - Medium Term (Early Year 4+, Later Year 5-10)
  - Late (Year 10+)
  - Generational: closing the gap

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Evaluation and Indigenous Policy: Why?

- Politically contested space – evidence provides a circuit breaker
- Evidence provides an invaluable tool
  - Trends and priorities
  - Policy and program factors
  - Service models
  - Application of interventions
Evaluation – Getting it right and making and impact

Two inter-related challenges:

- Getting it right – about evaluation process and the Indigenous context
- The methods and strategies for enhancing the impact of evaluation of policy and service development
Important influences for evaluation in Indigenous contexts in Australia

Indigenous leadership and involvement...  
Leadership...
Participation in research processes including governance...
Reaching Agreement...
Important influences for evaluation in Indigenous contexts in Australia

- Collaborative governance models
- Agreement making methods (MOU etc) and issues (data, IP, ethics)
- Ethics planning (is there a difference between research and evaluation? Issues for multi-jurisdictional projects)

Indigenous leadership and involvement...
Values and ethics: Guidelines for the conduct of Research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research

NHMRC
Important influences for evaluation in Indigenous contexts in Australia

Workforce development...

- Indigenous evaluators
- Community research and evaluation assistants
- Cultural competency in evaluation
Important influences for evaluation in Indigenous contexts in Australia


Important influences for evaluation in Indigenous contexts in Australia

- Involving Aboriginal community in evaluation processes
- Engagement strategy for implementation

Community & Stakeholder engagement...
Important influences for evaluation in Indigenous contexts in Australia

Community & Stakeholder engagement...

- Methods
- Feedback
- Use of incentives
- Cultural issues
Important influences for evaluation in Indigenous contexts in Australia

Planning for influence and impact...

- Building strategic relationships and networks of influence (Who is the client?)
- Communication
- Other Impact strategies/methods
Ad Hoc Knowledge Exchange Development

Research Project Implementation

Research Team

Publications  Web  Workforce  Brokerage  Media

Research Transfer Process

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Facilitated Knowledge Exchange Development

Phase 1

- Quality Assurance
  - Knowledge Exchange Priorities

Phase 2

- Contract
  - KE Processes
  - Integrated Knowledge Exchange Plan

Research Process
Important influences for evaluation in Indigenous contexts in Australia

- Leadership...
- Participation in research processes including governance...
- Reaching Agreement...
Important influences for evaluation in Indigenous contexts in Australia

Evaluations

Methods

Development

- Impact & Process Outcomes
- Data Systems development
- Analysis (including attribution in complex program evaluation)
Take home messages

- Evaluation has a significant role in Indigenous health and other contexts in Australia

- Supporting service and systems development

- Providing an evidence base in a contested policy context
Take home messages

- Issues that require a focus in order to ‘get it right’.
  - Indigenous leadership
  - Workforce capacity
  - Community Engagement

- Nevertheless methodological development is still important
The impact of evaluation can be improved by a greater emphasis on:

- Strategies and methods that strengthen the link between evaluation and the development of practice and policy
- Communication strategies