



Be Healthy: Implementing culturally secure programs for obesity and chronic disease prevention with remote Aboriginal communities and families

Research Focus: Aboriginal Health, Chronic Disease Prevention, Workforce Development

Project Overview: Aboriginal people from several Kimberley communities requested support for implementing culturally secure lifestyle modification programs that foster internal motivation, enhance health knowledge, and modify health beliefs and risk perception. We co-designed, piloted and refined the 'Be Healthy' program with 110 Derby Aboriginal people. The 8-module program involves practical nutrition education, discussion of chronic diseases, cooking, stress management and group physical activity. Content is tailored to local culture and younger age (15-40 years) and delivered by Aboriginal Program Officers in a culturally secure, supportive, and enjoyable atmosphere. The pilot program demonstrated acceptability, positive behaviour changes and proof of concept in a challenging setting.

This project will empower Aboriginal people to increase exercise levels, improve nutrition and reduce obesity. It combines the power of research to drive evidence-based positive behaviour change with the wisdom, knowledge, and cultural strength of Aboriginal communities, integrated with the major Kimberley healthcare providers.

This community-led initiative will be adapted using a similar co-design process with other Aboriginal communities, implemented on a large scale, and evaluated. Through partnerships between Aboriginal organisations and academic researchers, the program will be culturally relevant, rigorously evaluated and embedded within the community for sustainability and will deliver short, medium, and long-term health benefits.

Team Members:

- Matt Lelievre, Julia Marley, and Steve Pratt - Rural Clinical School of WA, Broome
- Erica Spry - Rural Clinical School of WA and Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services, Broome

Collaborators:

- Derby Aboriginal Health Service - Derby
- Djarindjin Aboriginal Corporation - Djarindjin
- Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services - Broome
- West Australian Country Health Service - Kimberley
- Diabetes WA - Perth

Timeframe: 2018 – current

Funding and Support: Stan Perron Charitable Foundation, National Health and Medical Research Council

Plain Language Reports: [Be Healthy - Plain Language Reports](#)

Publications:

Seear KH, Lelievre MP, Atkinson DN, Marley JV. 'It's Important to Make Changes.' Insights about Motivators and Enablers of Healthy Lifestyle Modification from Young Aboriginal Men in Western Australia. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 2019, 16:1063. [DOI:10.3390/ijerph16061063](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16061063)

Seear KH, Atkinson DN, Henderson-Yates LM, Lelievre MP, Marley JV. Maboo wirriya, be healthy: Community-directed development of an evidence-based diabetes prevention program for young Aboriginal people in a remote Australian town. *Evaluation and Program Planning* 2020, 81: 101818. [DOI: 10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2020.101818](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2020.101818)

Seear KH, Atkinson DN, Henderson-Yates LM, Lelievre MP, Marley JV. Piloting a culturally appropriate, localised diabetes prevention program for young Aboriginal people in a remote town. *Australian Journal of Primary Health* 2019, 25:495-500. [DOI:10.1071/PY19024](https://doi.org/10.1071/PY19024)

Seear KH. Supporting healthy lifestyle changes for type 2 diabetes prevention among young Aboriginal people in a remote Western Australian town. Doctoral Thesis, The University of Western Australia, 2020. [DOI:10.26182/5e2a42c325ef2](https://doi.org/10.26182/5e2a42c325ef2)

Get Involved: For further details please contact *Matt Lelievre*: matt.lelievre@rcswa.edu.au