

Healing Steps on Country – Exploring care pathways for Aboriginal People in the Kimberley with diabetes-related foot complications

Research Focus: Diabetes, Health Services, Chronic Disease Screening and Management

Project Overview: Diabetes-related foot disease (DFD) is a significant cause of morbidity and mortality in Australia. DFD is Australia's leading cause of amputation and has higher mortality rates than most cancers. Aboriginal people in Western Australia are up to 38 times more likely to undergo an amputation for DFD than their non-Indigenous counterparts. Managing DFD requires a multidisciplinary team. In rural and remote regions, access to specialist services is limited. In the Kimberley care is mainly provided through primary healthcare clinics. Timely diagnosis and management of DFD is essential as delays increase the risk of complications such as amputation and the need for extended time away from community and family.

Aboriginal People experience high rates of DFD and present at a young age. Primary and outpatient services provide a key role in DFD prevention and care in the Kimberley. People want more flexibility, autonomy, and culturally appropriate education in self-managing DFD, with the support of ACCHS.

Team Members:

- Sophie Moustaka - Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services and University of Notre Dame Australia
- Ala McKay, Ellen Stapleton, Jodie Millroy and Courtney Fairfull - University of Notre Dame Australia
- Chantelle Carr - Boab Health Services
- Sarah Tomlinson - WA Country Health Service: High Risk Foot Clinic
- Emma Griffiths - Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services, Rural Clinical School of WA and Kimberley Renal Services, Broome

Collaborators:

- Broome Regional Aboriginal Medical Service
- Derby Aboriginal Medical Services
- Yura Yungi Medical Service
- Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service
- Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services

Timeframe: 2023 – current

Plain Language Reports: [DFD Plain Language](#)

Presentations: Lowitja Institute: 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference, 2025 – *Healing Steps on Country: Culturally safe research methods*, Ala McKay, Jodie Millroy, Ellen Stapleton

Publications: Pending

Get Involved: For further details please contact Sophie Moustaka: sophie.moustaka@kamsc.org.au or Courtney Fairfull: phmanager@kamsc.org.au at Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services