



# Validation of the Kimberley Mum's Mood Scale (KMMS)

**Research Focus:** Perinatal Mental Health, Aboriginal Health

**Project Overview:** The KMMS project emerged from concerns among Kimberley healthcare professionals that the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) was unsuitable for Aboriginal women. A community-based participatory action project led to the creation of the two-part KMMS. Part 1 is an adapted version of the EPDS; Part 2 is a structured clinical yarn that explores psycho-social stressors and resilience factors in Aboriginal women's lives. This approach leads to deeper connections, enabling a fuller understanding of each woman's context.

The KMMS offers a culturally respectful approach to mental health screening, fostering trust and engagement between Aboriginal women and their healthcare professionals. The validation study showed that almost all participants had protective factors that helped mitigate mental health risks, with family relationships being the most significant protective factor. Healthcare providers found that the KMMS enabled a more holistic view of women's mental health by considering both risk and protective factors.

The KMMS underscores the importance of culturally tailored approaches in perinatal mental health care, showing that innovative screening methods can be sustainably implemented into routine clinical practice. It has influenced clinical practice by providing a culturally safe framework for assessing perinatal mental health.

Implementation into policy and practice includes:

- Endorsed by the Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum, and the 2024 edition of the 'National Guide to a Preventive Health Assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People' (RACGP/NACCHO)
- Included in the national iCOPE perinatal mental health screening platform
- Integrated with Electronic Medical Record systems, supporting clinical use and sustainability
- Free online KMMS training with over 550 people trained since 2019

## Team Members:

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- Sandra Campbell, Diana Jans and Mark Wenitong - Apunipima Cape York Health Council
- Ernest Hunter - The Cairns Institute, James Cook University, Cairns
- Karen Edmond - UWA School of Paediatrics and Child Health, Perth
- Rhonda Marriott - Murdoch University School of Psychology & Exercise Science and WA Dept of Health, Perth

**Collaborators:**

- Kimberley Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
- West Australian Country Health Service – Kimberley & Pilbara
- Mawarnkarra Health Service Aboriginal Corporation
- Apunipima Cape York Health Council
- Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service

**Timeframe:** 2009 – current

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**Plain Language Reports:** KMMS-Plain language Reports

**Publications:**

Kotz J, Munns A, Marriott R, Marley JV. Perinatal depression and screening among Aboriginal Australians in the Kimberley. *Contemporary Nurse* 2016, 52(1), 42-58. DOI:10.1080/10376178.2016.1198710

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Carlin E, Atkinson D, Marley JV. 'Having a Quiet Word': Yarning with Aboriginal Women in the Pilbara Region of Western Australia about Mental Health and Mental Health Screening during the Perinatal Period. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 2019, 16(21), 4253. DOI: 1660-4601/16/21/4253

Carlin E, Blondell S, Cadet-James Y, Campbell S, Williams M, Engelke C, Taverner D, Marriott R, Edmonds K, Atkinson D, Marley JV. Study protocol: a clinical trial for improving mental health screening for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pregnant women and mothers of young children using the Kimberley Mum's Mood Scale. *BMC Public Health* 2019, 1521. DOI: 10.1186/s12889-019-7845-3

Carlin E, Spry E, Atkinson D, Marley JV. Why validation is not enough: Setting the scene for the implementation of the Kimberley Mum's Mood Scale. *PLoS One* 2020, 15(6):e0234346. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0168969

Carlin E, Seear KH, Ferrari K, Spry E, Atkinson D, Marley JV. Risk and resilience: a mixed methods investigation of Aboriginal Australian women's perinatal mental health screening assessments. *Social Psychiatry Psychiatric Epidemiology* 2021, (56)547-557. DOI:10.1007/s00127-020-01986-7

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Carlin, E. Enhancing mental health screening approaches and outcomes for perinatal Aboriginal women in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Doctoral Thesis, The University of Western Australia 2023. DOI:10.26182/v1kf-gz22

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