SmokeCheck Update
November 2011

SmokeCheck is a unique brief intervention program delivered by Health Workers to identify, encourage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who smoke tobacco to make positive and healthy behaviour changes.

A SmokeCheck brief intervention involves making the most of every opportunity to raise awareness and help a smoker to stop or reduce their smoking. Not smoking around children, family and friends is also strongly encouraged.

Engaging with clients, sharing stories, and the use of ‘motivational interviewing’ techniques are important parts of a SmokeCheck brief intervention.

SmokeCheck was developed by Queensland Health with northern Queensland Indigenous communities as a strategy to help bring down smoking rates.

More than 50% of Indigenous people smoke tobacco, compared with 15% of all Queenslander adults. Indigenous people also begin smoking at a younger age and are less likely to successfully quit smoking than non-Indigenous people.

Since 2005, more than 2100 Health Workers from government and non-government health and welfare services across Queensland have been trained in the SmokeCheck program.

Evaluation
In 2006, an evaluation of the SmokeCheck brief intervention was conducted with 143 Indigenous clients of primary healthcare services in Queensland urban, regional and remote communities.

The evaluation used a treatment versus control methodology. Clients receiving the SmokeCheck advice compared with those not receiving it reported statistically significant reductions in daily cigarette intake. Positive trends for clients receiving SmokeCheck included:

- increased number of quit smoking attempts
- reduced nicotine dependence
- increased client motivation to change
- improved readiness to change
- increased awareness of the adverse health effects of smoking.
Overall, the 2006 evaluation showed that SmokeCheck is effective. The program is culturally appropriate, builds Health Worker skills in delivering brief intervention, and supports positive and healthy behaviour changes.

**SmokeCheck training**
The SmokeCheck Team offers free specialist training to Health Workers with Indigenous clients and patients. The training provides an opportunity for workers to gain knowledge and skills that are important in delivering brief intervention and motivational interviewing. These skills are transferable to other areas of clinical work.

Indigenous specific images and language are used in all parts of the training. The SmokeCheck Team also provides ongoing post-training support, printed resources and a regular newsletter.

In 2006, an evaluation of the SmokeCheck training was conducted with 217 Health Workers from Queensland urban, regional, and remote communities.

The pre and post training evaluation revealed statistically significant outcomes for Health Workers which included:
- increased skills in delivering brief intervention
- increased confidence in discussing smoking with clients
- increased self-efficacy
- increased role legitimacy.

Topics covered in the SmokeCheck training include:
- Why smoke?
- Who Smokes?
- Journey
- Health Worker role
- Health effects of smoking
- Issues in the community
- Mental health
- Smoking and pregnancy
- Young people
- Brief Intervention
- Motivational Interviewing
- Stages of change
- Implementing SmokeCheck in your workplace

**SmokeCheck printed resources**
Free Health Worker and client resources are available to SmokeCheck trained Health Workers. The culturally appropriate resources include four client booklets (one for each stage of change), a pregnancy booklet, tear-off stages of change sheets, posters, stickers and note pads.

**More information**
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