



Transforming Gynaecological Health Care for Aboriginal Women

The importance of cultural safety and changing the way we think about hospital-based outpatient clinics

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Introduction

The Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHOS) have long suggested that culturally appropriate specialist care improves outcomes for Aboriginal patients.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience poorer gynaecological health outcomes than other Australian women.

Causal factors include fear of hospitals, poor cultural sensitivity of health care workers in the hospital system and systemic racism.

Aim

A metropolitan based ACCHO established a gynaecology service within the primary health setting to provide a culturally appropriate model of health care for Aboriginal women in Perth.

Method

The clinic was established with minimal funding and was embedded within the cultural safety of an ACCHO. Aboriginal health practitioners and doctors work alongside the specialist to build trust, ensure cultural safety and address fears.

Discussion

To ensure better health outcomes for Aboriginal women, hospitals and governments need to rethink the current hospital-based model of care.

Strategies need to include knowledge and awareness of the history, experience, culture and rights of Aboriginal women.

Embedding specialist services within a culturally appropriate setting has the potential to improve gynaecological outcomes for Aboriginal women.



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Results

Over 12 months (April 2021-2022), 59 patients were seen at the ACCHO clinic with 80% attendance due to flexibility to add same-day extra appointments. In the same period at the major tertiary hospital in WA, 179 patients were seen with 60% attendance rate.

100% of patients booked for surgery through the ACCHO model of care attended and proceeded, compared to just 73% of patients booked through the tertiary system.

