

AH&MRC CQI PROGRAM:

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: **WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT INDICATORS?**



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Definition of an indicator:

- An indicator is a succinct measure, a tool
- An indicator allows us to measure, monitor and evaluate the structure and processes of care and how they affect patient outcomes
- In primary health care indicators are used to measure the quality, safety and performance of health services and systems

Why do we need indicators?

- Increasing cost of health care
- Evidence-based policy making
- Greater requirement for accountability in funding arrangements
- A focus on quality improvement within health care systems
- Need to understand health burdens and assess the impacts of health care on populations



Who uses indicators and for what purpose?

Indicators are used at all levels of a health system:

- World Health Organisation
- Governments
- Accreditation Organisations
- Health care services/providers
- Patients



What makes a good indicator?

(No indicator is perfect)

- Relevance
- Validity
- Reliability
- Evidence base
- Feasibility
- Sensitivity
- Specificity
- Balance
- Tested
- Safe
- Comparability
- Timeliness
- Definable
- Responsive



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Pencheon, D. 2008 The Good Indicators Guide,
AIHW, 2009, Towards national indicators of safety and quality in health care.

Strengths and Limitations of Indicators

STRENGTHS:

Useful for:

- CQI
- Monitoring
- Evaluating
- Benchmarking
- Accountability
- Comparability

LIMITATIONS:

- Only indicate
- Need to provoke questions and promote action to be effective
- Hard to measure aspects
- Quantitative
- Gaming/negative consequences



Key Steps in developing/choosing indicators:

- Identify objectives/purpose of indicators, what are the aims, overarching priorities and principles which will guide their use
- Review literature and existing indicators
- Review scientific/clinical evidence
- Convene expert panel and reach consensus on a set of indicators
- Consult broadly and seek feedback
- Pilot indicators
- Ongoing review and modification



Indicators and Aboriginal health



A selective history of national Aboriginal health indicator policy

- **1986** Performance Indicators for Aboriginal Health Services – included death and hospitalisation rates
- **1990** Draft Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Goals and Targets (not implemented) associated with the NAHS
- **1997** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan and National Performance Indicators and Targets in Aboriginal Health – reported by govts to AHMAC
- **2000** NAGATSIHID established
- **2004** National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2003-2013 and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework
- **2008** Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes COAG Agreement
- **2011** National Key Performance Indicators for Aboriginal primary health care services rolled out

National KPIs



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National KPIs – questions for discussion

1. What benefits will ACCHSs gain through reporting on these nKPIs?
2. What challenges and risks can you see for ACCHSs reporting on these nKPIs?
3. Which individual nKPIs are most useful for ACCHS CQI and why?
4. Which individual nKPIs are least useful for ACCHS CQI and why?
5. What important aspects of ACCHS work are not covered by these indicators?