

Chronic Disease Management in Health Centres

Editor: In August 2001 a group of experienced NT physicians, DMOs and editorial committee members met to discuss the developments in chronic disease management to be included in the fourth edition of the CARPA STM. These editorial comments below are based on the views of this locally relevant expert group.

Things we wish to promote through the CARPA STM

- The value of 'keeping on trying' in people with high absolute cardiovascular risk, as they will have highest potential health gain. This means that, though it may be tempting to give up trying to make progress with managing chronic health conditions or health threats with some individuals, if they are at high risk of suffering complications of their condition the health service should continue to offer and encourage a useful relationship with the person.
- Focus on positive things like stopping smoking rather than be overly focussed on poor glycaemic control.
- Emphasise the benefit of once-a-day doses. (To the extent of removing captopril from the formulary).
- Reminder that people can take all their medications at the one time of the day e.g. night.
- Encourage a step-wise approach to the management and engagement of people with chronic diseases, don't try to do it all at once.
- Encourage making plans for follow-up, building relationships.
- Time management tips.
- Encourage training for staff on managing multiple agendas and tips that help fit opportunistic health checks into other presenting issues.

Tips

Some people have developed useful 'stories' for talking about and explaining chronic diseases. These might usefully be collected and offered as part of staff training. For example, glycaemic or lipid control can be discussed with many men as being like a carburettor in an engine. Smooth running of the engine needs the right types of fuel (food), and a faulty carburettor can be helped with medicines but can not be replaced with a new one, etc. In time damage can build up in the engine (body) even though it appears to be running well (asymptomatic).

- If it is hard to get people into town, try case-conferencing and care planning by phone. Use specialists over the phone.
- Plan care and referrals so they need less specialist reviews in town (e.g. copy of review pathology to specialists followed by phone review).
- Try to make personalised care plans based on negotiation with the patient and discussion of pros and cons of options.
- Save time by avoiding a stack of meaningless BP checks and BGL checks (without putting the clients off).

- The person is not the disease, depersonalise the disease. Avoid value statements and words, e.g. good, bad, better. Better to use words like helpful, protecting, risky, safer.

Useful chronic diseases resources

Chronic Diseases Network NT

One stop information shop on chronic diseases related topics. If you are after a poster, policy, program, reference, or video and have not been able to track it down give the network a call on (08) 8922 8280 and they will do their best to meet your request.

Central Australian (NT Department of Health and Community Services) chronic disease team at Health Development has a standardised chronic disease resource kit that is currently being distributed to all health centres.

The Australian Kidney Foundation (AKF) resources

- For Information from the AKF NT office contact Toni Kelly on (08) 8945 4047.
- For more information from the AKF WA office contact Jen O'Rielly on (08) 9322 1354.
- The Kidneys: An excellent educational flip chart for Aboriginal communities and health workers. Produced by the Australian Kidney Foundation WA. Free!
- Fifth edition of Living with Kidney Failure, a book for patients going onto dialysis. For more information contact the AKF NT.
- Water Works Your Kidneys, a lower primary teaching resource produced by the AKF WA. For more information contact the AKF WA. Free!
- Kidney Disease: preparing for dialysis, a video for remote Aboriginal people. This video is aimed at Indigenous clients preparing for dialysis treatment and highlights the importance of dialysis and what to expect in the city. Free from AKF WA.
- The AKF also has an extensive range of useful brochures or fact sheets. These include ones on diet, diabetes and kidney stones.

Nightcliff Renal Unit

- The Nightcliff Renal Unit has developed excellent local resources, including a video Kidney Problems: stories about choices, that provides basic information about different choices in seven languages.
- The unit also has comprehensive training manuals for AHWs and RNs.
- For more information contact the Nightcliff Renal Unit on (08) 8948 9000

Healthy Skin flip chart and video

- Launched May 2001 at Galiwin'ku. This great A3 chart, 'Healthy Skin Story', is an initiative that grew out of the need for educational resource material to support community education and assist communities to run 'Healthy Skin' programs.
- For more information contact Michelle Dowden, Galiwin'ku population health nurse on (08) 8997 9031.

Scabies flip chart

- This flip chart is a pictorial presentation on the causes and treatment of scabies.
- For more information contact Gabbi at the CRCATH on (08) 8922 7861.

The Heart Foundation

- The Heart Foundation has a great range of resources that include Listen to your heart, Heart story and the Tobacco book.
- For more information contact the Heart Foundation on (08) 8981 1966.

Pongi Pongi (tobacco) book

- The Pongi Pongi (tobacco) kit is a kit of health promotion resources about tobacco developed by Tiwi communities/Bagot community/NHF and Menzies School of Health Research.
- For more information contact Rowena Kalikajaros on (08) 8981 1966.

Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc (ARDS)

- Telephone Darwin Office (08) 8982 3444, or visit their website at www.ards.com.au
- ARDS have an extensive range of publications and information papers. They have also recently released a scabies video in Aboriginal language on the prevention and treatment of scabies. 30 minutes. Cost \$33.00.

Asthma Foundation

- For information on the following resources contact the Asthma NT office on (08) 8922 8827.
- Short wind poster and flip chart/educational resource.
- Healthy living: controlling your asthma video.
- Range of fact sheets and brochures.

Diabetes Australia NT

- DANT also has an extensive range of resources for consumers and providers of chronic disease programs, such as healthy eating recipes.
- For more information ring them on (08) 8927 8488.
- Healthy Shopping Guide, \$2.20
- Keeping Families Strong, One Tucker, One Family, an A3 flip chart for health professionals.

OATSIH

- The Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health has a range of useful publications, such as the National recommendations for the clinical management of alcohol related problems in Indigenous primary care settings.
- For information call (02) 6289 4967 or visit their website at <http://www.health.gov.au/oatsih/pubs.htm>

Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health (CRCATH)

- The CRCATH has an extensive range of occasional papers and research reports such as: Indigenous Australians and Tobacco: A literature review and Forgetting Compliance: Aboriginal Health and Medical Culture.
- For more information visit the website at www.ath.crc.org.au or phone (08) 8922 8841.

Menzies School of Health Research

- MSHR has a wide range of useful publications including: Environmental Health Handbook and Rheumatic Fever Information Package.
- Ring (08) 8922 8624 or visit their website for a list of publications at www.menzies.edu.au/ocpapers/index.html

Arthritis and Osteoporosis NT

- This association regularly runs the Healthy Living Self-Management course that assists people with chronic diseases to better manage their condition. They also run leaders courses that train people to run the courses. There are also useful information pamphlets.
- Call (08) 8948 5235 between 10.00am-2.00pm.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

- There are a number of excellent publications including Heart Stroke and Vascular Diseases Australian Facts 2001.
- For more information call (02) 6244 1032 or visit <http://www.aihw.gov.au>

The Bush Book

- The Public Health Bush Book has been written as a resource for people who work with remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. It has been written by people who have worked in, or with, remote community health care teams over many years, and relates their accumulated learning to published national and international evidence.
- To order, contact Health Promotion Policy and Program Development, Health House, PO Box 40596, Casuarina 0811 or fax to (08) 8999 2420.

DHCS website

- DHCS website (<http://www.nt.gov.au/dhcs/>) has access to a huge range of information, including the Bush Book, statistical reports, the Health & Welfare of Territorians and the Chronicle.

Bush Telegraph

- The Bush Telegraph is a website that has comprehensive information about NT communities and the types of services available.
- Visit it at <http://finke.nt.gov.au/BushT/Community.nsf>

DHAC Mental Health Branch

- Resources brochures at <http://www.mentalhealth.gov.au>

Centre for Disease Control (CDC)

- Recently released discussion paper on anaemia in Aboriginal children and the new treatment of anaemia in Aboriginal children. Also have wide range of information sheets on communicable diseases, and are revising the scabies treatment protocol.
- For more information contact Darwin CDC on (08) 8922 8044.

Living With Alcohol and Tobacco Action Project

- LWA & TAP has a number of valuable resources that include: Choose Yourself education kit, Cheers, and Taking Care of Business.

- For more information call (08) 8922 8704.

HEATworks

- HEATworks has a range of pamphlets, magnets, badges, books, posters and videos on chronic disease related topics, including diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. They have pamphlets for desert mob and salt-water mob.
- Call for more information.
Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council Inc Health Promotion Unit
Ph: (08) 9193 6043
Fax: (08) 91922500
Email: heatworks@wn.com.au

Nganampa Health Council

- Nganampa has a variety of useful resources that include:
Videos on environmental health, child's health, food and work
Audio cassettes (including The Shower Block song)
Posters on women's health, learning to stay well
T-shirts
Reports and books
- Call Nganampa Health Council on (08) 8952 5300 or fax (08) 8952 2299.