



The benefits of Indigenous youth assessments: A narrative systematic review

Background

The psychological and physiological transitions of youth are compounded by profound transitions in social role, particularly for Indigenous youth including those relating to cultural identity, employment education and family. Indigenous youth are also contending with challenges of ongoing colonisation and everyday lived experiences of racism which negatively impacts their health and wellbeing. A comprehensive assessment of Indigenous youth's health and wellbeing could enable early diagnosis and remediation of physical and mental ill health.

Aim

To synthesise evidence about the appropriateness and acceptability of primary health care- based health assessments for improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous youth aged 12- 24 years living in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America (USA), Taiwan and the Sámi people.

Methods

A systematic search strategy was developed and applied to 19 electronic databases (four bibliographic and 15 grey literature). Studies were included if they reported on health assessments conducted in primary health care with youth aged 12 – 24 years who were Indigenous to Australia, New Zealand, Canada, USA, Taiwan, and the arctic regions of Scandinavia and Russia. Two independent reviewers performed the quality appraisal and data extraction. A narrative synthesis was undertaken.



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Results

Of the 3061 unique studies identified, seven met the eligibility criteria and were included: one randomised control trial, four mixed-methods and two qualitative studies. Included studies showed youth health assessments were useful for making new diagnoses, detecting social and emotional wellbeing concerns, and some biomedical parameters such as sexually transmissible infections. Prominent qualitative themes included the importance of co-creation, the appropriate to deliver the health assessment, benefits of e-Health and acceptability of the health assessment for youth.

Conclusion

Health assessments were conducted in different ways which could be useful in other contexts such as the combination of an electronic tablet-based screening followed by face-to-face conduct. Not all Indigenous youth health assessments have had sufficient input from Indigenous young people. Future development should include Indigenous youth health priorities.

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