
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Community Connections - Community-Led Cancer Screening Project

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Introduction: The Community-led Cancer Screening Project (CLCSP), funded by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services is a three-year project being run in partnership with the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN), and three other Primary Health Networks (PHNs) in Victoria.

The project aims to increase participation in bowel, cervical and breast cancer screening by building capacity within primary care and through facilitated targeted community-led interventions. The project focuses on under-screened communities including Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

This abstract focuses on the community-led aspect of the project.

Practice change implemented: The project focuses on engaging and collaborating with communities to understand the barriers and enablers for cancer screening. The project is underpinned by the principles; local initiatives, equity, partnerships and sustainability. A community-led governance group that includes project partners, stakeholders and community members guide the work.

Aim and theory of change: A place-based approach is being used to address the structural and systemic issues that cause cancer screening differences between populations. Collaborating and co-designing initiatives with communities ensure that projects meet its needs.

Targeted population and stakeholders: Filipino community and people of low socio-economic status in Brimbank and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Wyndham local government areas.

To successfully engage with the communities, community members have been recruited to help govern, lead and implement activities and assist with evaluation. They have been pivotal in engaging community organisations to be involved.

Timeline: The Community-led Cancer Screening Project is being delivered from July 2017 – June 2020.

Highlights:

- Establishment of governance group involving community members
- Filipino community member assisting in fostering engagement, providing access to several community groups such as a Filipino playgroup

- 40 women participated in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Health Day where three community members shared their breast screening experience
- Cervical Screening Information pilot has delivered 90 community members 'Period Packs' containing Cervical Screening information via a local food bank.

Sustainability: Initiatives are being collaboratively designed and implemented by community members and stakeholders including local community health centre, Neighbourhood House, and a university. Initiatives are being supported by the Program Coordinator to build the capacity of community to continue beyond the project.

Transferability: The community-led place-based methodology has been shown to be transferable to other health initiatives and can be applied to other regions.

Conclusions: To date, 111 community members have been involved in consultations. A further 133 community members have been involved in pilot projects aimed at increasing cancer screening. Further data will be available in November.

Discussions: Involvement of community members have been crucial to build and establish connections in communities to ensure that its needs are being recognised and addressed.

Lessons learned:

- Emphasise importance of community members in bridging the gap between communities and facilitators
- Trust and respect are vital in community and stakeholder relationships
- Regular communication is key in community-led projects to maintain momentum and ensure ongoing community input.