Background

- Australia’s Indigenous population, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, proudly maintain the longest continuing culture in the world.
- Since colonisation of Australia, this population has experienced significant health inequalities, including a high prevalence of diabetes.
- Rates of gestational diabetes are 1.5 times higher in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women than in non-Aboriginal women.¹
- Furthermore, the prevalence of type 2 diabetes in pregnancy is 10 times higher than in non-Aboriginal women.²
- Targeted resources are required to increase awareness and improve management of diabetes in pregnancy among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.
- The Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) is the lead advocate for Aboriginal health in the Australian state of Victoria, where Aboriginal people make up 0.7% of the population.³
- VACCHO works in partnership with Diabetes Victoria, the state’s peak diabetes organisation, to improve awareness and improve management of diabetes in pregnancy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, proudly maintaining the longest continuing culture in the world.
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Methods

- In December 2013 a working group was formed to adapt the Feltman™ tool so it could be used as a resource to teach women about diabetes in pregnancy.
- The working group, led by Diabetes Victoria and VACCHO included Aboriginal Health Workers, midwives, diabetes educators, dietitians and health promotion professionals. Input was gathered from Aboriginal Health Workers and midwives who provide pregnancy care for Aboriginal women to ensure resources developed would be relevant and culturally appropriate for the Aboriginal community.

Aims

- To increase awareness about diabetes in pregnancy among Aboriginal women in the Australian state of Victoria.
- To empower Aboriginal Health Workers to improve diabetes management during pregnancy through the development of targeted education resources for the Victorian Aboriginal community.

Results

- The working group developed Feltmum™, a diabetes in pregnancy add-on kit for the Feltman™ resource.
- Each Feltmum™ kit includes:
  - A felt baby, wig and uterine artery.
  - A set of 21 stick-on prompt cards.
  - A set of stick-on discs and keys showing glucose, insulin and pregnancy hormones.
  - A ‘Key Messages’ booklet.
  - A USB stick loaded with an Instructional Video (also available online http://tinyurl.com/p529w79).

Conclusions

- The Feltmum™ kit provides Aboriginal families with culturally appropriate, evidence-based information about diabetes in pregnancy in a visual format which is easy to understand.
- The Feltmum™ add-on will be made available to health organisations in Australia who work with Aboriginal women during pregnancy.
- Training in how to use the kit will also be provided.
- Feltmum™ fills an identified gap in diabetes prevention and management education for Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

The Feltman™ diabetes education tool

- In 2010, VACCHO and Diabetes Victoria launched the Feltman™ diabetes education tool following consultation with Aboriginal Health Workers.
- Feltman™ is a life-sized felt body showing the main organs involved in the digestion and metabolism of food, and the main parts of the body affected by diabetes.

References


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