

GOANNA Survey 2: the second national sexual health survey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Authors:

Elliott SR¹, Bryant J², Wand H³, Pitts M⁴, Donovan B³, Kaldor J³ and Ward J^{1,5}

¹ South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI), ² Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW, ³ Kirby Institute, UNSW, ⁴ Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, ⁵ UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, University of Queensland.

Background:

The GOANNA Survey is a periodic sexual health survey specifically designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. GOANNA Survey 2 has recently been completed (September 2017-January 2020). The aim was to gather current information on knowledge, risk behaviours and health service access for STIs and blood borne viruses (BBVs).

Methods:

Participants aged 16-29 years were recruited at community events and completed anonymous questionnaires on hand-held tablets. Aboriginal organisations partnered in the project, with staff trained as survey coordinators and local community members recruited as peer survey collectors.

Results:

Over 1300 participants were recruited from urban, regional and remote areas of Australia. Sexual identity was more diverse than the first GOANNA survey (2011-13). Eighty percent of respondents were sexually active. Major sexual risks included inconsistent condom use (60% reported no condom at last sex compared to 46% in first GOANNA survey) and sex while drunk or high (27%). Mobile phone apps were used by 28% to find partners. While 70% of sexually active respondents had been tested for STIs, only 42% of 16-19 year olds reported being offered STI testing during their last health check compared to 70% of 20-24 year olds and 74% of 25-29 year olds. Self-reported STIs were common (17% of sexually-active respondents). BBV testing had declined since the first survey, with only 33% ever tested for HIV and 32% for hepatitis C. Aboriginal medical services were preferred for sexual health advice, health checks, STI/BBV testing and help for alcohol and drug use.

Conclusion:

The GOANNA Survey is now established as an ongoing program of research to gather social and behaviour data and monitor long term trends in order to support policies and health interventions targeting STIs and BBVs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

No conflicts of interest to disclose.