

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RESPONSE TO FACILITATE ISOLATION REQUIREMENTS IN ABORIGINAL HOMELESS SUBSTANCE DEPENDENT PEOPLE

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Background:

From November 2021 South Australia experienced a rise in COVID positive cases. As per the South Australian Emergency Management Act 2004 declaration COVID positive individuals are directed to isolate for 10 days. On the 1 January 2022 it was requested that Drug and Alcohol Services of South Australia (DASSA) provide a quarantine facility to safely isolate COVID positive Aboriginal people who were homeless and had identified substance related issues.

Description of model of care/intervention:

In 4 days the DASSA Inpatient Withdrawal Unit was converted to a COVID isolation facility that was culturally appropriate for Aboriginal people. Consultation with a variety of Aboriginal groups occurred and culturally safe aspects of the facility were initiated including: a fire pit on site for a “comfort fire”; the provision of culturally appropriate food (including 40 kg of kangaroo tails for cooking and consumption twice weekly); the recognition of the importance of family and community by facilitating movement and gatherings within the unit and access to family via web based platforms; cultural diversionary activities; and offering either substance withdrawal management or a managed alcohol program (MAP).

Effectiveness:

70 COVID + clients were admitted to the facility over 10 weeks. 65 identified as alcohol dependent. 60 successfully completed their mandated isolation requirements. 9 were transferred to COVID medical-management hotels. 7 were transferred to acute hospital with 6 returning to the DASSA COVID facility to complete their isolation. No clients absconded from the facility. A managed alcohol program was implemented with 53 clients successfully managed utilizing the MAP. Multiple medical co-morbidities were screened for and treated during the quarantine period.

Conclusion and next steps:

This model of care illustrates the value of a culturally safe environment coupled with a MAP and not enforced abstinence to facilitate successful isolation in relation to COVID

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Nothing to disclose.