KICA

Kimberly Indigenous Cognitive Assessment Tool (KICA). For some time there has not been an appropriate and validated cognitive assessment tool for Indigenous people. KICA was originally developed and has been validated in several Indigenous communities in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Since its development KICA has also been validated in Northern Territory, and will soon be trialled in Cape York and Torres Strait Islands Queensland and Rural New South Wales.

KICA was also used to investigate the prevalence of dementia and risk factors for cognitive impairment in remote Indigenous Australians. The results of these investigations were presented at the National Alzheimer’s Australia Conference 30 May – 1 June 2007 and to federal politicians at Parliamentary Friends of Dementia Forum 18 June 2007. (See below for prevalence rates and risk factors).

KICA has other holistic Indigenous assessments that can be used with the cognitive assessment or independently. The other Indigenous appropriate assessment tools include emotional wellbeing assessment; activities of daily living and medical history. More information and a copy of the tool is available at: www.healthyKimberley.com.au/chronicdisease.html

Free DVDs explaining how to use the KICA tool are now available. To receive a copy email Kate Smith ksmith@meddent.uwa.edu.au

Are you an Indigenous person caring for someone with Dementia?

Under Australian Government funding in the 2005 Budget, Alzheimer’s Australia was funded to manage and conduct the Dementia Caring Pilot Project. The project objectives are to:

- Pilot skills enhancement activities, which meet the needs of families and carers of people with dementia, through the CCRC network; and
- Test the possibility of expanding the CCRC network role to provide a broader range of carer support services.

Particular emphasis was put on providing these services to rural and remote areas with special funding available for complex and costly cases.

Currently, 50 CCRC’s Australia wide are participating in the project and indications are that most will complete their contracted number of skills enhancement activities by the project end date of 1 August.

As a response to the needs of Indigenous carers in remote areas, Peninsula CCRC in Cairns organised a very successful session at Yarrabah, with another two sessions planned, one at Pormpuraaw and one at Kowanyama. These sessions were funded under the Special Needs category of the project, which covers the additional costs incurred for rural and remote activities.

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Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
Dementia News

Indigenous events at
Alzheimer’s Australia

- Training for people who are caring for someone with dementia
- “Indigenous people are more than 4 times more likely to have dementia compared to non-Indigenous people”

“Free DVDs explaining how to use the KICA tool are available.”

Dr Dina LoGiudice (far left) and Kate Smith (far right), Developed the KICA tool.
Prevalence and Risk Factors of Dementia

Dr Leon Flicker, (University of Western Australia), Dr Dina Logiudice (National Ageing Research Institute) and Kate Smith (Kimberley Aged and Community Services) undertook research within the Kimberley region of Western Australia, whilst validating the KICA tool. This project was funded by NHMRC. To gather prevalence and risk factor data of cognitive impairment within the Indigenous community of Kimberley Region a sample size of each community within the Kimberley that reflected the total Indigenous population was used. This preliminary evidence, which is soon to be published, highlights the high rates of cognitive impairment due to dementia within the Indigenous population compared to the non-Indigenous population. The data (shown on the table below) has some limitations, that is, higher rates of mobility of the younger populations and no access to brain imaging scanners, but there is a high confidence interval and the researchers are confident that the limitations do not influence the accuracy of these results. The study also identified the main risk factors for acquiring dementia as being smoking; head injury; stroke and low education.

This study was conducted in rural and remote population of specific geographic area, which suggests more research needs to be done in urban and other areas to properly understand the scope of the problem. Given the higher rates of dementia compared to mainstream.

Queensland Indigenous Dementia Awareness Project

The Queensland Indigenous Dementia Awareness Project, with the assistance of Alzheimer's Australia (Queensland), recently developed a range of radio, printed and online communications material promoting greater awareness of dementia to Indigenous people in Queensland. This material focuses on giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people targeted and culturally appropriate information on dementia, its warning signs, and the treatment of dementia. It also promotes early detection of dementia, lifestyle choices that lower the risk of developing dementia, and improved awareness of, and access to, dementia services.

Eight two-minute dementia awareness radio programs are currently being broadcast on rotation over a three-month period on Indigenous radio stations around Queensland. Queensland listeners can tune into their nearest Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander radio station to listen to the information, and anyone interested in the project can read more and listen to copies of the radio segments by visiting www.bimaprojects.org.au