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**Urban Aboriginal women and health services: Evaluating health care together**

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Many urban Australian Aboriginal women find they experience poor health outcomes linked to complex personal, family, community and colonisation issues. Aboriginal health documents promote increased Aboriginal involvement in health service planning, provision and evaluation. Many health professionals support concepts of community partnerships, but find difficulty prioritising the time and approaches necessary for building trustworthy, respectful relationships. Participatory action research has been found to assist this process.

This paper discusses the development of a collaborative approach between Aboriginal community women, a community health campus and an Anglo community health nurse/researcher in response to Aboriginal women's concerns that services were inadequately equipped or resourced to meet their current health and well-being needs.

Aboriginal women were positioned as integral co-researchers, supported by a nurse/researcher. An Aboriginal women's reference group formed to plan and oversee all phases of the project with Elder women giving cultural approval. Key informants including health and education professionals (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), managers, the Aboriginal Health Council of SA and Aboriginal health researchers were included in a lengthy community consultation.

This session focuses on the importance of preparation and processes, rather than discussing outcomes. Aboriginal women have been very clear that health professionals and evaluators often miss crucial steps needed to ensure culturally safe communication. This occurs in urban as well as rural and remote areas. Until all parties can communicate effectively and respectfully, evaluations will only skim across the surface, rather than discover what issues exist for each of the people involved, and how best we can work collaboratively toward addressing these.