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## Strengths-based chronic disease health education in Wangkatjungka Community

E.E. Vansittart<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services, Fitzroy Crossing, WA, Australia

Wangkatjungka remote community in the Fitzroy Valley, Western Australia, is home to approximately 180 Wangkatjungka, Walmajarri, or Gooniyandi Aboriginal people.<sup>(1)</sup> Many of the women living in Wangkatjungka Community enjoy painting and use creative art as a therapeutic practice. Three health promotion educators from Nindilingarri Cultural Health Services, Fitzroy Crossing, created a chronic disease education program, designed to utilise the Wangkatjungka artists' strengths to capture their thoughts and ideas on health subjects. This study aims to improve the health literacy, and therefore health outcomes, of women living in Wangkatjungka Community through two-way learning and empowerment; coupling the women's art skills and traditional stories with chronic disease health education. The observational cohort study design program was advertised in the Wangkatjungka Community and at local Influenza vaccination clinics prior to the study commencement. Names, phone numbers, and house numbers were collected from Wangkatjungka Community women who were interested in participating in the program. The program is implemented weekly over a 12-week period, from July 2022–October 2022. Participants are collected from their homes each week, and sessions take place in a communal building in community. Each session involves interactive activities covering one of various topics including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, smoking, kidney disease, healthy eating, alcohol, bush medicine, and camp cooking; followed by healthy cooking and painting contributions to a large canvas. Each session runs for approximately two hours; however, cultural consideration allows for flexibility around the exact schedule timing.<sup>(2)</sup> Pre- and post-evaluation surveys are used at the end of each session and at the beginning of sessions 2–12 to evaluate the women's learnings. Survey questions are verbalised to promote clarity and understanding, and survey answers are recorded by the health promotion educators as literacy is limited among group members.<sup>(3)</sup> Over the 12-week program, there will be 12 individual sessions. To date, participants have engaged well throughout the sessions, asked health-seeking questions, and have retained information from the sessions. Approximately five women per session have attended, with week-to-week variations. Participant absence in program attendance has been mainly due to grocery shopping, and/or health service appointments/commitments in Fitzroy Crossing. Participants have also voiced their desire for program sessions to be taken on-country near the local water hole. Overall, a strengths-based approach for this study has been successful in gaining participant engagement in the program. The finished painted canvas will be displayed in the community office and, together with knowledge gained from the program, may empower the participants and wider community to make healthy lifestyle choices. To improve program attendance for future health education programs in Wangkatjungka Community, educators should consider on-country sessions and ensure the sessions are facilitated on a day of the week suitable for the whole group.

### References

1. Marra Worra Aboriginal Corporation (2022) Wangkatjungka [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.mww.org.au/wangkatjungka>
2. Wilson AM, Kelly J, Jones M, *et al.* (2020) *BMC Health Serv Res* 20, 601.
3. Choudhry FR, Ming LC, Munawar K, *et al.* (2019) *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 16 (7), 1112.