**New recommendations for cardiovascular disease risk assessment and management in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults aged under 35 years**

**Main changes**

The updated recommendations are for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals to receive:

* Combined early screening for diabetes, chronic kidney disease and other cardiovascular (CVD) risk factors from the age of 18 years at latest;
* Assessment of absolute CVD risk using an Australian CVD risk calculator from the age of 30 years at the latest.

New recommendations for CVD risk assessment and management will be published today in the *Medical Journal of Australia*. The recommendations were endorsed by the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Central Australian Rural Practitioners Association and the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance, led by the Heart Foundation. The approach to early screening was developed in partnership with the Australian National University’s Aboriginal Reference Group (Thiitu Tharrmay) and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in CVD prevention.

**Take home messages**

1. Most heart attacks and strokes can be prevented, and in the last 20 years, the rate of deaths from CVD in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples has almost halved.
2. High risk of cardiovascular disease begins early among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and is mainly due to diabetes and renal disease**.** It is recommended that there should be:
	1. **Combined early screening for diabetes, chronic kidney disease and cardiovascular disease risk factors from the age of 18 years.** This should include assessment of blood glucose level or glycated haemoglobin, estimated glomerular filtration rate, serum lipids, urine albumin to creatinine ratio, and other risk factors such as blood pressure, history of familial hypercholesterolaemia, and smoking status.
	2. **Assessment of absolute CVD risk using an Australian CVD risk calculator from the age of 30 years.** Outside of Communicare, the best CVD risk calculator to use is [www.auscvdrisk.com.au/risk-calculator/](http://www.auscvdrisk.com.au/risk-calculator/)
3. What you can do: **Assessment of CVD risk as part of a health check**. The most important part of this check-up is working with your doctor to manage your risk factors to improve your heart health and help you live a healthier, longer life.

**Want more information and resources?**

A team at ANUis developing a toolkit on risk communication in CVD: **Healing Heart Communities**. Designed as a resource for all clinical staff in primary care, it aims to support conversations about CVD risk. During development, the team has consulted the **Australian National University’s Aboriginal Reference Group (Thiitu Tharrmay**) and partnered with **We are Saltwater People**, an Indigenous-owned graphic design company based in QLD to create original artwork, design and layout.

You can find these initial resources here: [<https://rsph.anu.edu.au/research/projects/absolute-cardiovascular-disease-cvd-risk-and-implementation>]