

Indigenous Eye Health Prompts and Indicators in Primary Care Position Statement

Eye health prompts and indicators need to be included in the clinical software platforms used in primary health care to support primary health care professionals to regularly conduct basic eye examinations. Current platforms include Communicare, Best Practice and Medical Director.

The suggested prompts and indicators arise from the recommendations of the Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision (1). They have been developed with wide stakeholder consultation and have strong sector endorsement (2).

However, these prompts and indicators are yet to be incorporated into clinical software systems.

This paper

1. Identifies the prompts and indicators that can be used in primary care to remind and support the provision and monitoring of basic eye care for Indigenous people.
2. Recommends the actions that should be taken by the clinical software companies to include these Indigenous eye health prompts and indicators into their systems.

Background

- Vision loss causes 11% of the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.
- Indigenous people have six times more blindness and three times more vision impairment than non-Indigenous Australians.
- Up to 94% of vision loss among Indigenous populations is preventable or treatable.
- Good eye care starts with good primary care with the provision of regular eye examinations, early detection, timely referrals, and treatment.
- Basic eye examinations (3) are a required part of the Medicare (MBS) Item 715 - health assessments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and older persons.

What is required

1. Eye health fields (Appendix – Table 1)
 - a) The eye health fields required to record a basic eye examination
2. Eye health prompts (Appendix – Table 2)
 - a) The need for a basic eye assessment as part of an annual health check, MBS Item 715
 - b) The need for annual retinal examination or photography for those with diabetes
3. Eye health indicators (Appendix – Table 3)
 - a) Percentage of Indigenous patients billed for MBS Item 715 in the preceding 12 months
 - b) Percentage of Indigenous patients with diabetes having retinal exam in the preceding 12 months



Recommendations for Software Companies

1. Include the specified eye health fields in clinical software
2. Develop a simple “one-page” instruction for their users to explain how the existing software programs can be set up to provide these eye care prompts and indicators
3. Develop and incorporate eye care fields, prompts and indicators into their software updates

Implications

The inclusion of Indigenous eye health fields, prompts and indicators into clinical software programs will serve as a reminder and so support primary health care professionals to improve basic eye care which in turn will help address the inequalities in eye health and the utilisation of eye care services by Indigenous Australians.

The inclusion of Indigenous eye health prompts and indicators is an integral part of the sector-endorsed national policy strategy - the Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision.

References

1. Taylor HR, Anjou MD, Boudville AI, McNeil RJ. *The Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision: Full Report*. Melbourne: Indigenous Eye Health Unit, Melbourne School of Population Health, The University of Melbourne, ISBN 978073404756 4; 2012.
2. Indigenous Eye Health Unit. Indigenous Eye Health e-Health and Technology Roundtable 11 June 2013. Indigenous Eye Health Unit Melbourne School of Population and Global Health: The University of Melbourne, 2013. http://iehu.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/952874/ehealth_technology_roundtable_2013.pdf
3. MBS Mandatory, Eye Checks for Health Assessments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adults and Older persons. 2014 http://iehu.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/965713/eye_checks_proposed_guide.pdf

Appendix

Table 1. Eye fields required to support MBS Item 715 health assessment eye checks

Eye fields type	Eye fields
History	Problems/difficulties with vision or eyes
	Problems with glasses or contact lenses
	Can see clearly and comfortably both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Near vision (when held in hands) b) Distance vision (looking far away)
	Has diabetes
Vision/visual acuity	Measure near vision (binocular)
	Measure distance vision (right and left eye)
Eye examination	- Eye movements
	- Pupils
	- External and anterior eye (lids, eye lashes, conjunctiva, cornea)
	- Trachoma trichiasis
	- Retina in people with diabetes
	- Retinal photograph
Refer	- Vision/eye presentation when problems/difficulties not solved, including change in vision
	- Diabetic retinal examination each year
	- Reduced vision at near or distance vision

Table 2. Prompts for eye examination

Trigger of prompts	Recommended action sequence 1	Recommended action sequence 2
Indigenous patient	Annual health assessment (MBS Item 715)	Eye check/assessment included as part of the MBS Item 715
Indigenous patient with diabetes	Retinal eye photo and/or examination (required annually)	-

Table 3. Indicators for eye care

Indicator	Data fields that will lead into the indicators	Purpose and rationale	
Percentage of Indigenous patients billed MBS Item 715	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult health assessment in Indigenous patient aged ≥ 15 years (numerator) • Indigenous patient aged ≥ 15 years attending the clinic (denominator) 	<p><u>Purpose</u></p> <p>The percentage of Indigenous patients aged ≥ 15 years who have been billed under MBS Item 715 in the preceding 12 month period.</p>	<p><u>Rationale</u></p> <p>This MBS Item includes a specific eye health screening assessment as a mandatory component.</p>
Percentage of Indigenous patients with diabetes who have had a retinal photo or eye exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous patient having a retinal photo or eye examination (numerator) • Indigenous patient with diabetes (denominator) 	<p><u>Purpose</u></p> <p>Percentage of Indigenous patients with diabetes who were examined for diabetic retinopathy each year.</p>	<p><u>Rationale</u></p> <p>The NHMRC national guidelines recommend that all Indigenous people with diabetes undergo annual retinal examination. This indicator measures the extent to which this target is being met. (Note that for non-Indigenous people with diabetes, the recommendation is for a retinal examination every two years).</p>