

Tobacco Control News

Research Roundup March 2025

Latest Findings from the Koori Quit Pack study



Hello TIS teams!

I'm back again this month for a quick update on the findings from the *Koori Quit Pack* study, which was led by Associate Professor Michelle Kennedy in 2022. Three exciting papers have recently been published with a focus on understanding how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who smoke can be better supported in their quit journey. While TIS does not deliver smoking cessation support, we can still learn a lot from these papers about the value of culturally safe and acceptable quit support programs.

The *Koori Quit Pack* was an Aboriginal-led study assessing the acceptability, practicality, and potential success of delivering smoking cessation support through mailout packages to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This pack (see image below) included a variety of useful and readily available quitting resources including:

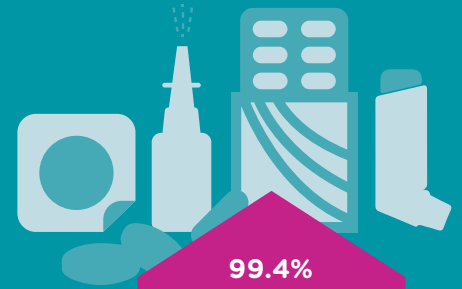
- Pamphlets
- Information on government-provided mobile apps
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-specific supports like the Aboriginal Quitline webpage
- Health promotion materials
- Aboriginal merchandise
- Optional free mailout combination nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) (patch plus oral form)
- Multiple check-in phone calls from researchers
- Proactive Quitline referral

Participants in this study were people who smoked daily, recruited through Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS), Facebook ads, and social media posts shared by ACCHS and Quitline in New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (VIC) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT).



Take home message for TIS teams

Whilst TIS funding does not cover supplying NRT, or delivering smoking cessation activities, informing people about their options for accessing NRT and other cessation supports is an important TIS program activity. TIS teams should familiarise themselves with the culturally safe cessation supports available locally so they can promote them to community. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people find NRT safe and effective for assisting their quit journey. However, they need clear information about what NRT is, where it's available locally, and how to access it. TIS can provide this information at a population level through activities such as social marketing campaigns, social media messaging, or education and engagement activities at events.



99.4%

Nearly all participants were interested in receiving free NRT delivered to their homes

99.4%

Nearly all participants believed that quitting smoking would improve their health



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In depth Paper Review

Booth, K., Roberts-Barker, K. (Wiradjuri), Foster, J. (Worimi), Mersha, A. G., Maddox, R. (Bagumani), Bonevski, B., Chamberlain, C. (Palawa), Clarke, K. (Worimi/Gamilaroi), Segan, C., & Kennedy, M. (Wiradjuri) (2024). "It's changed my life. I'm not smoking anymore. I don't want to smoke anymore": Exploring the Acceptability of Mailout Smoking Cessation Support for and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 27(3), 398-407. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntae065>



Mersha, A. G., Bonevski, B., Maddox, R. (Bagumani), Chamberlain, C. (Palawa), Clarke, K. (Worimi/Gamilaroi), Forster, J. (Worimi), Roberts Barker, K. (Wiradjuri), Booth, K., Segan, C., & Kennedy, M. (Wiradjuri). (2024). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People Who Smoke and Want to Quit—A Cohort Profile from the Koori Quit Pack study. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 27(3), 408-417. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntae213>



This in-depth qualitative study used Yarning method to explore participants' experiences of quitting smoking with the *Koori Quit Pack*. Insights into preferences for smoking cessation supports and the acceptability of the mailed-out *Koori Quit Pack* were gathered from 14 participants.

Take Home Message

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are highly motivated to quit smoking. A key role for the TIS program is sharing information about effective and culturally safe quit support programs like the *Koori Quit Pack*.

Key Findings

- The *Koori Quit Pack* mailout package combined with behavioural support was an acceptable and preferred approach to cessation support.
- Participants found the combination of NRT products with culturally responsive behavioural support to be a helpful strategy for quitting smoking.
- Participants were motivated to quit smoking for their health and family. They recognised the harmful effects of smoking on their health and were motivated to improve their health. Participants often referred to their family and community as an important part of their quitting journey, with many hoping to inspire change for future generations.
- Most participants had tried smoking cessation services before, but the support wasn't appropriate or accessible. They also lacked ongoing support from health professionals, had limited information about NRT products and how to use them, and found these products expensive.
- Receiving appropriate support, NRT products, and useful information through the mailout package helped participants overcome the challenges they faced in their previous attempts to quit smoking.
- Participants valued the culturally responsive support from the Aboriginal researchers in this study. Building ongoing relationships with these researchers played a key role in their success in quitting smoking and accepting the mailout package.
- The mailout package not only provided knowledge and skills to help participants quit smoking but also empowered them to share what they learned and support others to quit as well.

Study Limitations

- Although Torres Strait Islander people participated in the larger *Koori Quit Pack* study, no Torres Strait Islander people gave feedback in this Yarning study, so their experiences of the support program were not included.
- Since the *Koori Quit Pack* study mainly recruited participants from NSW, VIC and ACT, the findings from this paper might not apply to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in other regions.

The purpose of this paper was to provide a snapshot of the participants at the start of the *Koori Quit Pack* study. Most participants were from NSW (83%), with smaller proportions from VIC (14.5%) and the ACT (2.4%). The researchers collected data on:

- Social and environmental factors such as age, gender, postcode, level of education and frequency of anyone smoking inside the home
- Smoking behaviours, tobacco and nicotine products used, and level of nicotine dependence.
- Motivation and confidence to quit
- History of quitting attempts and intentions to quit
- Mental health and well-being, including challenges that might affect motivation and confidence to quit

Take Home Message

Strengthen awareness and engagement with acceptable quit support by knowing your audience. Focus on engaging with different community groups like youth, pregnant women, and community Elders to understand people's preferences. Use your TIS activities to increase awareness of preferred smoking cessation supports.

Key Findings

- Most participants (85%) used regular cigarettes, while 27% used roll-your-own cigarettes. About one in ten participants used e-cigarettes.
- Nearly all participants (99.4%) believed that quitting smoking would improve their health, and most (94%) had tried to quit at least once.
- During previous attempts to quit, less than half of participants (41%) used behavioural support, 9% used Quitline, 27% used mobile phone apps, and 10% used other support tools like pamphlets or websites with information on quitting smoking.
- Participants aged 31-45 years were three times more likely to use Quitline compared to those aged 30 years and younger.
- Most participants believed that NRT is safe (81%) and effective (70%) for supporting quit attempts.
- Nearly all participants (99.4%) were interested in receiving free NRT delivered to their homes.
- Participants experiencing poor mental health reported stronger and more frequent urges to smoke and were less likely to consistently use NRT during past quit attempts.

Study Limitations

- As most participants were from NSW findings may not be representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities from other regions.
- Most participants were female (79.4%), which might limit the relevance of the findings for males in the community.

Kennedy, M. (Wiradjuri), Maddox, R. (Bagumani), Mersha, A. G., Chamberlain, C. (Palawa), Segan, C., Clarke, K. (Worimi/Gamilaroi), Donaldson, B., Roberts-Barker, K. (Wiradjuri), Forster, J. (Worimi), Booth, K., & Bonevski, B. (2024). *Koori Quit Pack: A Feasibility Study of a Multi-Component Mailout Smoking Cessation Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: "I Would Recommend it to Anybody. It's Just so Much Easier."* *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 27(3), 418-428. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ntr/ntae106>



This paper evaluated the success of the *Koori Quit Pack* for supporting quitting among 165 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander study participants. They did this by looking at the recruitment and retention rates, uptake of program components, and smoking abstinence at 2 weeks, 6 weeks, 10 weeks, and 6 months after participant recruitment.

Take Home Message

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people find NRT safe and effective for assisting their quit journey. However, they need better support and clear information about what NRT is, where it's available, and how to access it. Familiarise yourself with the current NRT options and how the community can access these resources. Whilst TIS funding does not cover supplying NRT, promoting its use and informing people about their options is an important program activity.

Key Findings

- Recruitment for the study was much quicker than anticipated, highlighting the acceptability of the program and the motivation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make a quit attempt.
- Over 90% of participants accepted and used the NRT provided in the mailout. Of those who used the NRT, 70% used a combination of short and long acting NRT.
- Nicotine patches and inhalers were the most popular NRT options.
- The mailout package, combined with phone support from the Aboriginal research team, supported participants to make successful quit attempts.
- At the 6-month follow-up, 50% of participants had made a quit attempt, 19% reported not smoking in the past week, and 12% said they had not smoked since starting the program.

Study Limitations

- While recruitment for this study occurred quickly, there was a high dropout rate before the baseline data was collected.
- Because this was a small-scale time-limited study, it was not possible to identify the factors that influenced successful quitting with the *Koori Quit Pack*. A larger study is needed to better understand what factors support successful quit attempts with mailout cessation support.

How do we measure the success of a cessation program?

Nicotine addiction makes quitting smoking challenging, and most people make several attempts before they quit for good. This is because nicotine dependence is a chronic, relapsing condition. Research indicates that only 3-5% of unaided quit attempts are successful. Using NRT (particularly combination NRT) can increase the likelihood of quitting, while combining NRT with behavioural counselling can triple the chances of success. Therefore, a cessation program with sustained quit rates between 9-15% is effective. At six months 12% of *Koori Quit Pack* participants had not smoked since starting the program and 19% reported not smoking in the past week, which means this program was effective for supporting people to quit.

The success of a smoking cessation activity can also be measured by its reach. Sometimes programs that increase reach because they are accessible and have greater appeal are less effective at supporting quit than more intensive, but less popular activities. This was not the case for *Koori Quit Pack*, which showed good reach as well as effectiveness, making it a highly impactful smoking cessation activity.

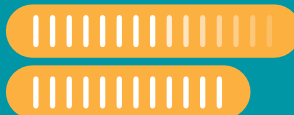
3-5%

of unaided quit attempts are successful



9-15%

of quit attempts supported by NRT + behavioural counselling are successful



12%

of *Koori Quit Pack* participants had not smoked in the six months since starting the program



Nicotine patches and inhalers were the most popular NRT options

