

Background

- Concerns have been expressed about ice use in Australian Indigenous communities (1-3).
- Little has been written on the specific needs of Aboriginal people who use ice (4) and there is very little documented evidence of treatment outcomes for Aboriginal methamphetamine users (5).
- A Victorian Inquiry concluded that further research is needed into treatment needs of specific groups including Aboriginal people (6).



Responding to ice use within an Aboriginal community: findings from a qualitative study

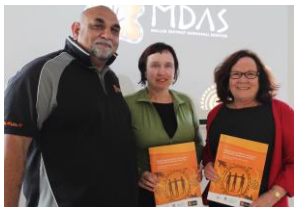
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Our research

- Partnership between **Mallee District Aboriginal Services** in Mildura and the **Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Unit** at the University of Melbourne
- Participatory approach to study design and analysis
- interviews with
 - 14 Aboriginal ice users
 - 6 family members and
 - 6 workers
- A small study in one community



This presentation

Will provide

- A summary of participants' views on factors that must be considered in responding to ice use in Aboriginal communities
- Links to a short film that we produced after conducting the study

Will not provide (due to time restrictions)

- Literature review
- Detail on methodology



Participants argued that responses for Aboriginal people who use ice should address:

- Historical trauma and contemporary disadvantage
- Shame
- Fear, and
- Dis/connection



Trauma and disadvantage

How I see it is Aboriginals are the biggest people that get affected by it easily. There's bikies coming into our towns and they work off these young ones and then the young ones are getting around lost. Everyone loses their spirit because their children are walking around, don't know what to do, you know. (ice user #13, female)

Especially in gaol, there's a lot of Indigenous people there and they know that there's a lot of pull from the black fellas in gaol ... (ice user #3, male)



Trauma and disadvantage



And I guess [we need] more social things for kids to do, especially in broader communities. It's easier, like, it's easy. It's easier to get ice than it is to, I don't know, walk into a shop for Indigenous kids. (ice user#12, male)



Trauma and disadvantage

You got to send them down to Melbourne ... Well they go down there for a little bit, stay off it, but they come back to the same problem. And I think this is where it's got to change. (family member# 2, male)

Maybe that's the thing at the moment is we're too shattered at the moment. It's, you know, breaking people apart. (family member #2, female)



Shame

You lose your family. I've lost most of me family. They look at you, dirty, you know, they look at you different. More disgusted. (ice user#10, female)



Shame



But with the Aboriginal community everyone knows everyone. We all know the same people in some way and they hear something, then they tell everybody else and then by the time it gets back to you you're the worst person in the world ... And you only like take, pinch \$20 from someone's purse, and you end up [having a reputation for] robbing a bank at the end of it. (IU 4, male)



Fear

And you know, having your, having guns pulled on you and your life threatened because you refuse to do something that they [dealers] want you to do. It's either, you know do that or, or, or they're going to take you out bush and, you know, knock you off.

(Ice user #3, male)



Fear

I just remember the day that I realised [my child was using ice], it was just painful, like, devastated. Because you hear all the stuff in the media and you see all the pictures and I had my eyes set on heroin and I was all prepared for heroin... But then when I heard of this ice and you see all the media at the time, ... and there's no coming back from it. So probably because I didn't have enough information. I had the scariest information, so it was just devastating (family member #6, male).



Connection

Well see that's the thing with blackfellas.
Family's the most important thing no matter
what (FM#2, female).

Being a [Koori] community member, I don't want
to resort to going straight to rehab for three
months. I don't want to be away from my family
and it would be too hard. (IU#12, male)



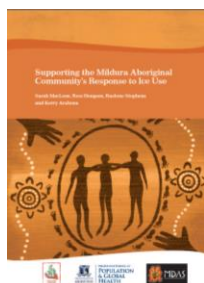
Connection

Yeah, there's always support. There's always support whether
[it's] your, like, second cousins or distant relations but there is
always support within the community. (ice user #12, male)

There should be a lot more [services] out there though for
[families], you know, like, because we are a family people, you
know? Instead of like because they're using it, instead of
pushing them away, we should, you know, cradle them in a bit
more and give them that incentive to get away from it... (ice
user #2, male)

Well like I mean my cousin ... like she's in my head all the time,
you know. She's always praising me and stuff like that. You
know, to hear that come out of one of your family's mouth...
(ice user # 1, male)

Ice project report

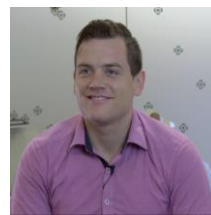


<http://www.onemda.unimelb.edu.au/responding-ice>
(7)

YouTube film

'Healing from ice use for Victorian Aboriginal people'

<http://youtu.be/EG-f3HQRhwo>



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References

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