

## Diabetic retinopathy screening for Indigenous Australians in the Kimberley

**Shelley Walters<sup>1</sup>, Verity Moynihan<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Kimberley Aboriginal Health Service; <sup>2</sup>Lions Eye Institute

**Aim:** To provide an overview of the Kimberley diabetic retinopathy screening program and examine the strengths and barriers to the provision of this model for the early detection of diabetic retinopathy.

**Methods:** A detailed description of the screening program model will be presented, focusing on the coordination of screening and the role of community-based Aboriginal Health workers. The efficacy of the program and barriers to screening for diabetic retinopathy will be discussed.

Conclusions regarding the screening program will be supported by data collected on the number and quality of screening episodes for each site at which screening occurs, as well as the age, gender and presence of retinopathy for those who have undergone screening from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2014.

**Relevance:** The screening program aims to provide a self-sustaining, functional screening program in isolated communities that is culturally appropriate and adaptable to a range of health services and settings. To deliver the program, training is provided to Aboriginal Health Workers and Nurses on eye care and the operation of a retinal camera. The screening program is an example of a successful community based eye health program and has provided a sustained service to the residents of the Kimberley region for over 20 years. The Kimberley program model is becoming increasingly relevant as interest in a national approach to screening for diabetic retinopathy grows, and may provide a blueprint for the implementation of similar services across Australia.

**Conclusions:** Based on the findings from the study, recommendations will be made on logistical and cultural processes to enhance the screening service in the Kimberley and elsewhere.