

Improving diabetes eye care for Indigenous Australians: a public health approach

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Background

- Diabetic retinopathy is a major cause of vision loss and blindness for Indigenous Australians
- Up to 98% of blindness from diabetes can be prevented with regular eye exams and timely treatment
- Only 53% of Indigenous Australians have had an annual retinal eye check in accordance with NHMRC guidelines
- This poster describes and encourages uptake of initiatives to reduce blindness and vision loss from diabetes

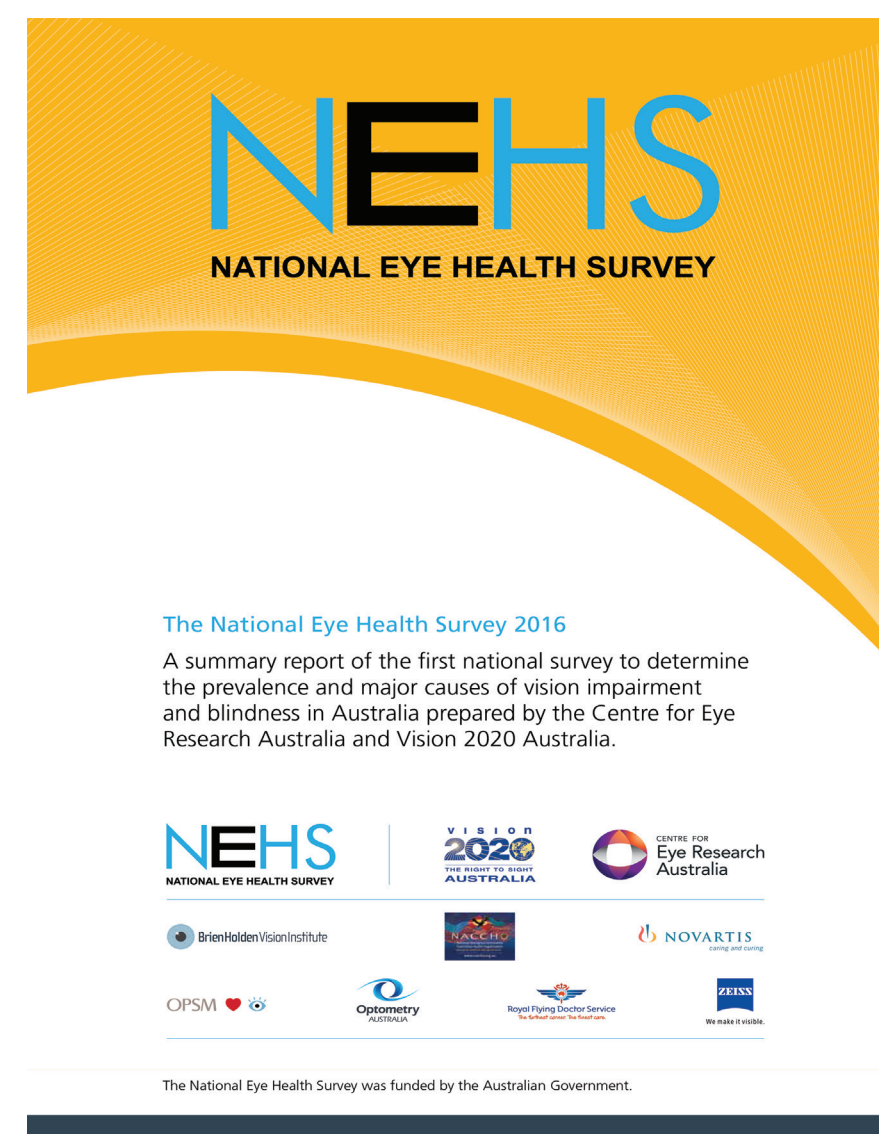
"I didn't listen, I never realised, diabetes can affect your eyes"

National Eye Health Survey (NEHS, 2016)

Findings from NEHS showed retinal eye examination rates were 53% which improved from 20% since the last survey (NIEHS, 2008)

Non-Indigenous retinal eye examination rates were 78%

Adherence rates for Indigenous people differed by remoteness areas with lowest rates observed in very remote regions



Conclusion

- All Indigenous people with diabetes should have an eye exam every year
- Timely treatment is effective in preventing severe vision loss and blindness
- Retinal eye examination rates have improved but there is still a significant shortfall in screening and gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- Resources available include:
 - Health promotion
 - Online practitioner education modules
 - MBS items
- Additional efforts to utilise available resources will improve diabetes eye care and reduce blindness

Health promotion resources and online training modules



The 'Check Today, See Tomorrow' eye health promotion resources were developed with community to promote diabetes eye care messages

Resources include kits, flip charts, posters, brochures and multimedia resources that are freely available

Online training modules on the assessment and management of diabetic retinopathy and grading of retinal images are also freely available



"Control your diabetes and save your sight"

"I see, you see, we all see our country"

All Aboriginal people with diabetes need to have an annual retinal eye check

MBS Item 715

Health assessments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can be provided every year under MBS



Includes mandatory eye check component

A 4-step guide for the screening of vision and eye health has been developed

MBS Item 715 can be used to find people with vision problems and ensure referral for further assessment

MBS Item 12325

Retinal photography item for Indigenous people with diabetes is picking up with over 500 claims in 10 months to August 2017

Medical practitioners or specialists managing patients with diabetes can provide this service

\$50 claim for photo and analysis

The Australian Government has provided funding for retinal cameras and training of staff in the use of equipment



"As I grow older, I want to see tomorrow"

"Don't be shame, go and get an eye check"