

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016

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OUTCOME: 0 - Whole of Portfolio

Topic: Diabetes Strategy

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Senator: Moore, Claire

Question:

Prof Murphy: Thank you, Senator Moore—we will take that on notice. Our biggest problem with TB is in the Indigenous population, and that is, obviously, where we are focusing. We are happy to provide some data on the relationship with diabetes.

Senator MOORE: That would be great. Thank you very much.

Answer:

Diabetes causes immunosuppression and this increases susceptibility to TB infection and the number of people with diabetes is increasing.

There are two main sources of diabetes information in Australia. These include:

1. Regular population health surveys conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which collect self-reported and measured diabetes information and risk factors.
2. The National Diabetes Register (NDR) which collects information on registrants with insulin treated diabetes. *Note: The coverage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on the diabetes register is likely to be an underestimate (1). Information about comorbidities for diabetes is unavailable from the NDR.*

There is no national data on diabetes and tuberculosis co-infection in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, however the rates of diabetes are high among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Australian Health Survey found that 1 in 5 of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the age of 25 have diabetes. Around 2 per cent of the adult Indigenous population were unaware that they had the condition. Although tuberculosis notification rates amongst the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population remain low by international standards (<5 cases per 100,000 population), they continue to be on average five times higher than the non-Indigenous Australian-born population (<1 case per 100,000 population).

The Australian National Diabetes Strategy 2016-2020 is a high level document that contains seven goals with potential areas for action that provide a range of ideas for implementation to achieve each goal. Goal 5 aims to reduce the impact of diabetes among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

(1) *Incidence of insulin-treated diabetes in Australia (2014). Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Canberra.*