State of knowledge, practice and responses to violence against women in Australian Indigenous communities.

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The issue of violence within Indigenous communities has been highlighted through political and media attention, but less is known about Indigenous experiences and viewpoints on the issue. This presentation presents a brief summary of published literature currently available on Indigenous women and violence. The summary is based on the state of knowledge paper *Existing knowledge, practice and responses to violence against women in Australian Indigenous communities* in which journal articles, evaluation reports and community reports were assessed and synthesised for information across four main areas of research:

1. What is known about violence against Indigenous women?
2. How do Indigenous women and communities see and experience the issue of violence against women (including definitions of family violence)?
3. What are the current responses (programs or approaches) to violence against women in Indigenous communities?
4. What are the Indigenous viewpoints on what works and what is needed?

In this presentation we summarise findings on Indigenous viewpoints of “what works” to address and prevent violence in Indigenous communities. Importantly, these Indigenous-led solutions focus on the concept of violence as a family and community issue. Violence is understood to be the result of, and perpetuated by, a range of historical and contemporary social factors rather than one individual’s problematic behaviour. Approaches to violence valued by Indigenous communities include community-based leadership and governance and programs focused on preventing the transfer of intergenerational trauma.

In this presentation we also summarise an evaluation of programs and approaches to violence against women in Indigenous communities. Most of the programs assessed demonstrated a positive impact on various aspects of behaviour, wellbeing, attitudes and skills related to addressing family violence in Indigenous communities. However, there are limited evaluation data on the effectiveness of policies and programs targeted at preventing and reducing violence against Indigenous women. There is a need for quality evidence determining the impact of family violence programs and wider information sharing about the positive progress being made in Indigenous communities.

We conclude that: funding for services and programs should include resources for Indigenous community input and, where possible, community delivery; multi-component programs are likely to be most effective as are programs that address the broader wellbeing of Indigenous families and communities, including the ongoing impacts of colonisation; and funding for services and programs for Indigenous communities should include resources to implement quality evaluation including both qualitative and quantitative research.