



National Indigenous Cancer Network (NICaN)

Breast Cancer Research Roundtable 2014

Summary Report

Summary

This summary report provides a condensed overview of the National Indigenous Breast Cancer Research Roundtable, held at the Lowitja Institute, Melbourne Australia on Wednesday, 27 August 2014.

Breast cancer is the most commonly occurring cancer amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, respectfully referred to as Indigenous in this report. Although Indigenous women are less likely to get breast cancer than other non-Indigenous women, they are more likely to die from breast cancer. The reasons for this are multifactorial and may include: late cancer stage at diagnosis, when the disease is more difficult to treat; lack of access to appropriate cancer services; and poorer general health.



Participants

The Roundtable was attended by over 45 people from a wide range of health sectors, cancer care organisations and services, and research groups involved with cancer in Indigenous people.

Overview of the day

The day was divided into four sections:

- (1) Welcome to Country and introductions;
- (2) presentations covering cancer epidemiology, cancer treatment, breast screening, familial cancer services and genetics testing, patient and doctor interaction, and the supportive care needs of Indigenous patients with breast cancer;
- (3) small group discussions of key issues;
- (4) identification of key research priorities.

Overview and background of the Roundtable

The Roundtable was an initiative of the National Indigenous Cancer Network (NICaN) and the Menzies School of Health Research, with funding provided by the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

Research roundtables are an important part of ensuring Indigenous community organisations, government, and other stakeholders come together to play an integral part of setting the research agenda in cancer and Indigenous communities. The National Indigenous Breast Cancer Research Roundtable is the third research roundtable, and the second that NICaN has hosted, to identify research gaps, priorities and opportunities for collaboration in the area of cancer and Indigenous Australians. This Roundtable brought together a wide range of key stakeholders to provide input in identifying and prioritising breast cancer research among Indigenous Australians.



Research Themes and Outcomes

Two primary themes were discussed at the Roundtable:

- (1) Early detection, risk management, and screening; and
- (2) Treatment, care, and survivorship.

The group also identified a number of underpinning themes that were to be discussed in their group discussions, including empowerment, community and consumer engagement and involvement, culture, holism and complexity, structure and governance, and principles of collecting and managing data.

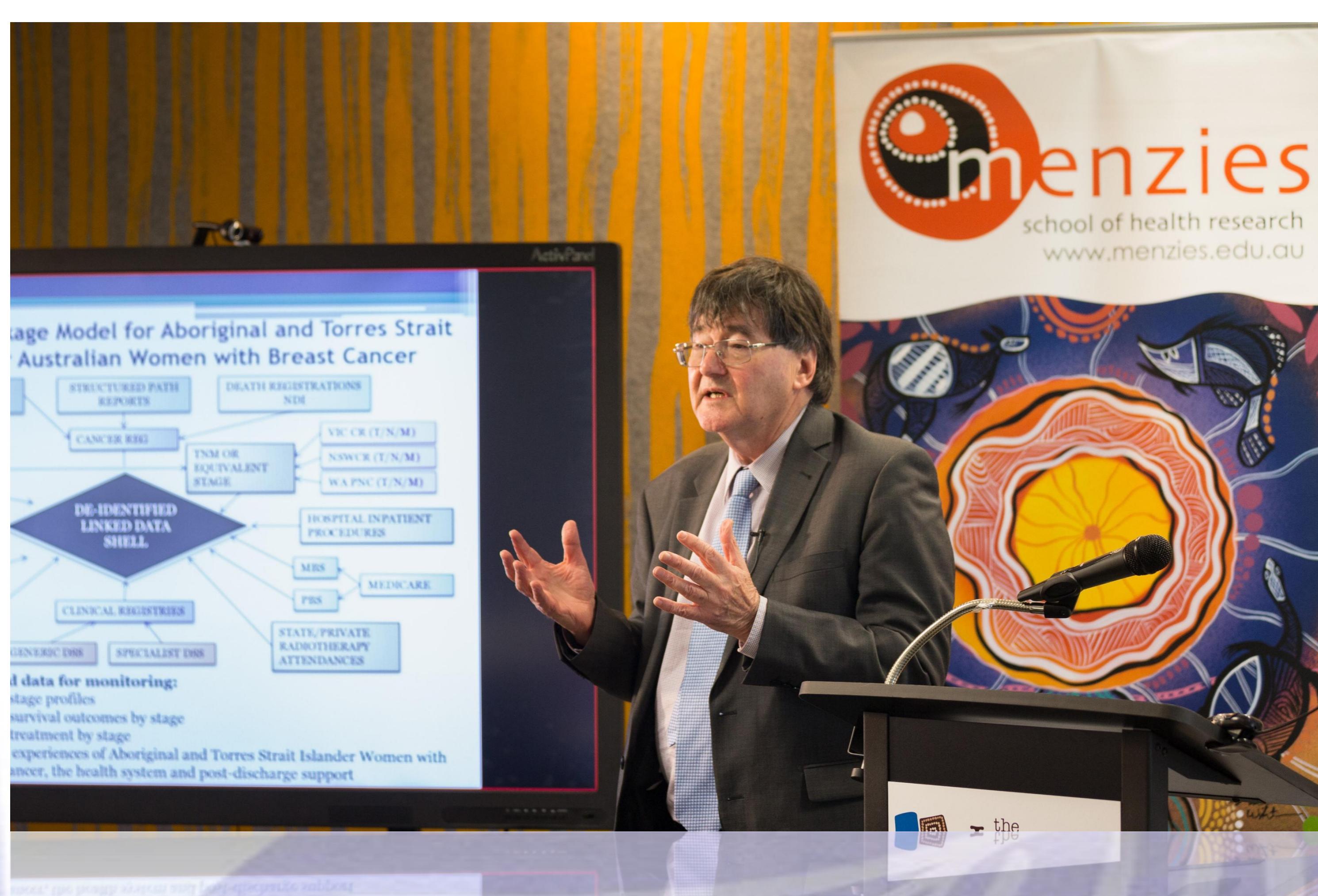
Three key priorities relating to early detection, risk management, and screening for breast cancer amongst Indigenous women and communities were identified:

- Review and evaluation of existing research, programs, and services;
- Breast awareness and health literacy;
- Screening.

Two key priorities relating to treatment and supportive care for Indigenous women with breast cancer were identified:

- Barriers to accessing and completing treatment;
- Culturally appropriate service delivery.

Participants who responded to a post-roundtable survey listed early detection and screening, education and disease awareness, and support services for Indigenous women as key priorities for further research. Representatives from a number of organisations professed a willingness to collaborate in future endeavours, including Cancer Australia, Menzies School of Health Research, the University of South Australia, The University of Melbourne, School of Public Health University of Sydney, the national kConFab research consortium, Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.



For more information about NICaN see: www.nican.org.au or contact the team on nican@menzies.edu.au

A copy of the full report from the day is also available via:

http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Research/Centres_initiatives_and_projects/Centre_for_Research_Excellence_Cancer/

Conclusions

The National Indigenous Breast Cancer Research Roundtable provided a forum to discuss, develop and prioritise a research agenda with the aim of improving outcomes for Indigenous people with breast cancer. Breast cancer survivors and advocates, cancer researchers, government representatives and health service personnel considered a broad range of topics, the culmination of which was a list of research priorities. The overarching themes were

- (1) the need to enhance early detection, risk management, and screening and
- (2) to improve cancer treatment uptake and care, and survivorship for Indigenous people. A number of participants agreed to collaborate to further these research agendas..

Acknowledgments

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For the purposes of this document, 'Indigenous' respectfully refers to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.