

Fact sheet

Aboriginal women and coronary heart disease

Heart disease is the leading cause of death amongst Aboriginal* women over the age of 18 years in Australia.¹

Compared to non-Aboriginal women, Aboriginal women are not only more likely to have a heart attack, but also to die from it without receiving hospital treatment.

In Western Australia, nearly 1 in 4 of older Aboriginal women die from heart disease before reaching hospital, compared to 1 in 5 of non-Aboriginal women.²

Aboriginal people living in metropolitan centres such as Perth have a similar rate of cardiovascular disease to that of Aboriginal people in remote areas of the Northern Territory.

Young and middle-aged Aboriginal Australian women are particularly vulnerable to major coronary events, such as heart attack and experience these at much younger ages than other Australian women.

Key Points

- ♥ Young Aboriginal women between the ages of 25-29 are 35 times more likely to have a heart attack than other West Australian women
- ♥ Aboriginal women under 55 years of age are over 13 times more likely to experience a heart attack than non-Aboriginal women of the same age
- ♥ Older Aboriginal women between 55-74 years have a risk of heart attack that is nearly 5 times greater than non-Aboriginal women
- ♥ On average, the age of first-ever heart attack for Aboriginal women is 53 years, compared to 66 years for non-Aboriginal women

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. Causes of Death 2008 (3303.0). March 2010.

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Hospital Statistics, 2007/08.

³ Katzenellenbogen J. M., et al. Incidence of and Case Fatality Following Acute Myocardial Infarction in Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Western Australians (2000-2004): A Linked Data Study. Heart Lung Circulation 2010, doi:10.1016/j.hlc.2010.08.009.

* In this document the term 'Aboriginal' refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

