
Aboriginality

Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>

Identifying and Definitional Attributes

Data Dictionary: NHDD

Knowledgebase ID: 000001

Version number: 1

Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT

Registration Authority: NHIMG

Admin status: SUPERSEDED

Authority:

Effective date: 30-JUN-97

Definition: Aboriginality of person according to the following working definition:

An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which he or she is associated (Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Constitutional Section 1981).

Context: Given the gross inequalities in health status between Aborigines and non-Aborigines in Australia, the size of the Aboriginal population and their historical and political context, there is a strong case for ensuring that information on Aboriginality is collected for planning and service delivery purposes and for monitoring Aboriginal health.

Relational and Representational Attributes

Datatype: Numeric

Representational form: CODE

Representation layout: N

Minimum Size: 1

Maximum Size: 1

Data Domain: 1 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
2 Other

Guide For Use: Aboriginality shall be determined by patient self-identification.

Related metadata: has been superseded by Indigenous status version 3

Administrative Attributes

Source Document:

Source Organisation: National Health Data Committee

Comments: All States and Territories except Queensland record Aboriginality for acute hospital in-patients. That State currently collects Aboriginality (as part of an ethnicity question) in non-metropolitan public acute hospitals and is moving progressively towards collecting it in other metropolitan acute hospitals.

The Morbidity Working Party noted that the Aboriginality data were relatively unreliable. In many hospitals, Aboriginal status was often coded only by appearance. Several members stated that the Aboriginality question was the most bitterly resented by admission clerks because they felt the patient could be embarrassed or annoyed at being asked.

The 1984 Taskforce on Aboriginal Health Statistics proposed the following standard for questions on Aboriginal origin in hospital morbidity, maternal and perinatal collections:

Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

- No
- Yes, Aboriginal
- Yes, Torres Strait Islander

It was recommended that each question should be accompanied by the following explanation: For persons of mixed origin, indicate the one to which they consider(ed) themselves to belong.

In relation to the last point, the Morbidity Working Party noted that Queensland and South Australia collect Aboriginality within a more general ethnicity question. The working party endorsed the Commonwealth/ABS definition of Aboriginality but did not go as far as recommending that a standard question be asked explicitly of all patients, leaving it up to each authority to implement the data item in an appropriate and consistent manner.

The Nursing Homes Working Party followed the reasoning of the Morbidity Working Party by recommending the inclusion of Aboriginality. However, it too did not go as far as to recommend that a standard question regarding Aboriginality be explicitly asked of all patients, leaving it up to each authority to implement.

The NH5 form for nursing home patients contains the following

question, which is similar to the one above but does not distinguish Torres Strait Islanders:

Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island origin?

- No
- Yes

Data Element Links

Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element

NHIM Demographic characteristic

Data Agreements which include this Data Element

NMDS - Admitted patient care From 01-Jul-89 to 30-Jun-97
