



*Translating evidence into every-day health promotion*

## **A mother shares the heartbeat of her child: rheumatic heart disease fertility and pregnancy for girls and women – short film**

### **Increasing knowledge of rheumatic heart disease in the community**

'Rheumatic Heart Disease Australia' is a national not-for-profit organisation that aims to prevent and reduce rheumatic heart disease (RHD) through education, awareness raising, quality data collection and reporting systems and national collaboration. Each year 100 women will be pregnant who have this disease. Building on research by Australasian Maternity Outcomes Surveillance System and Menzies School of Health Research, 'RHD Australia' has produced a short film to increase awareness about this disease in pregnancy.

**The content of the film revolves around relationships and family, pregnancy choices and contraception while dealing with a chronic health condition.**

### **Innovation Media**

This is a 10 minute film directed by Indigenous women about fertility, pregnancy and family for young Indigenous women who have RHD.

### **A Love Story**

The story opens with Tess in her bedroom. Tess texts with her boyfriend who says he would like to get serious and have a baby with her! Tess is surprised and happy but she has not told him that she has RHD! She phones her best friend Tina and they talk about the issues; they have many questions. They decide that Jamie, the boyfriend, needs to know about her illness. Tess talks with her boyfriend about RHD and what it may mean for their future together. The boyfriend has lots of questions and he wants some answers because he loves Tess. Tess and her boyfriend go to the clinic to find out answers to RHD and pregnancy and having children. The health practitioner explains many things to them and they feel pretty excited.

Tess also talks it over with her mum. Mum is cautious about Tess's plans. She explains her feelings and suggests that Tess slows the relationship down. Mum suggests some contraception that Tess can use even though she has RHD. Mum says she needs to think about family planning as her heart will have to carry a heavy load during the pregnancy.

Tess goes away to think about all this information. She talks about it on the phone with her best friend. What will Tess decide to do?

### **Implications for practice**

This is culturally appropriate health information for a target audience of girls and young women from ages **13 to 20s who have mild to moderate RHD**. It does not cover severe RHD and valve repair or replacements. Friends and families of young women may also like to view this film to better understand how to support young women have a healthy pregnancy.

RHDA <http://www.rhdaustralia.org.au/>



This film was directed by Indigenous women and will be distributed via social networks and various media platforms to increase knowledge, support healthy choices about RHD.

### **How could you use this film in your clinical practice?**

It can hard to find time to do health education or promotion in busy clinical practice, other things get prioritised. This short film could be used in a number of ways.

#### Unguided passive viewing

Teenagers can learn by themselves and they often learn though the internet, social media and sharing information among friends.

1. Give girls and young women who have an ARF/ RHD diagnosis the utube links or USB sticks so they can watch it. Don't hold onto it let it go out into the community! Pop it on the clinic TV, place it in the local library, community room, youth space...

Families can be a good form of support for young people.

1. Give the parents and aunties who care for young people with ARF/ RHD diagnosis the utube links or USB sticks so they can watch it.

There are 500 girls and young women with ARF/ RHD in this age group in the NT now. Find out who is on the RHD Register in your clinic.

2. Next time they come in for their penicillin injection show them the short film and ask them if they have any questions they want to ask. Repeat this once a year depending on age development and maturity.

#### Guided active viewing

Learning in groups

3. Organise discussions for young girls and women in age appropriate groups. Show the short film as a catalyst for a discussion, and generating questions. You may not need to have all the answers. RHD Australia can assist see <http://www.rhdaustralia.org.au/> There are lots of resources and professional development modules for Aboriginal Health Practioners, nurses, midwives and doctors.

Learning in families

4. Support a family discussion on RHD, especially if there are several girls growing up in an extended family. Perhaps even the boys need to understand how to look after their sisters and cousins who have RHD.

Learning at work

RHDA <http://www.rhdaustralia.org.au/>



Use your journal club or professional learning time to show this to new staff who may not be aware that ARF/RHD are a big problem in the NT. Use it as a discussion starter and

5. Direct new staff to the RHD Australia website for more information if they feel their skills need a refresh.

### **Originality**

Literature reviews and content surveillance of health promotion material from Australia and New Zealand shows that there is very little information available for girls and women who have RHD. Films directed by Indigenous women on any content are rare. The first language that this film will be translated into is Kriol.

### **Principles that underpin this film...**

- Included Indigenous women in the design, development, testing and making of the resource
- Visual resource that does not rely on reading ability in any language
- Patient centred -women centred – gender sensitive
- Culturally appropriate – in languages, tone and pitch
- Underpinned by human right to attain the highest standard of physical and mental health and the right to have information
- Accessible in low technology spaces and limited internet eg DVD, USB stick,
- Plain language approach– shared conceptual understanding
- Entertaining and positive – how to have a healthy pregnancy and baby

### Film company

E&G Productions [info@egprod.com.au](mailto:info@egprod.com.au)

### Distribution & Feedback Contact

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