



**Addressing the burden of disease:  
Is it possible to create and implement a  
structured Cardiac Rehabilitation program  
in a small rural village, which is effective and meets the expressed  
needs of clients.**



**Barbara Turner, Far West Local Health District  
Barbara.Turner@health.nsw.gov.au**

**Background:**

Circulatory disease is identified as the leading cause of death for the Far West Local Health District. Access to Cardiac Rehabilitation is severely reduced for people living outside the major town of Broken Hill.

**Aim:**

To evaluate the implementation of a Cardiac Rehabilitation program in a small rural village in Far Western NSW, to determine if it was effective and met the expressed needs of clients.

**Method:**

This was a mixed methods study. The program consisted of a standard 8 week program involving exercise and education sessions, and evaluation was of 2 programs held within a 12 month period. At least two of the education sessions were held by videoconference, with the remainder face to face. Participants were either self-referred, or referred by a health professional, and undertook a standard 6 minute walk test and a Borg (perception of exertion) self-assessment pre and post program. Participants were interviewed about their experience of the program to determine if the health consumer preferences were met, and to collect details of changes in exercise and dietary habits. Health professionals involved in the program were surveyed to ascertain their views on the program acceptability, effectiveness and sustainability.

**Findings:**

Participants improved in exercise capacity and diet and their families were supportive of the program. The program was acceptable in terms of program content, venue, accessibility and flexibility. Health professionals reported that the program was flexible to fit their visiting schedules and that the content was evidence based, and were supportive of its continuance.

*For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'*

Barbara has over 30 years' experience in Health, and has recently been appointed as the Health Service Manager at Menindee Health Service in Far West LHD. Barbara has worked at Menindee for 11 years, and was previously the Nurse Practitioner for the service. Barbara trained as a Registered Nurse at the Broken Hill and District Hospital, is a Midwife, and has a Certificate in Child and Family Health Nursing, a Bachelor of Social Science (Welfare), a Graduate Certificate in Advanced Practice (Rural and Remote), a Graduate Certificate in Diabetes Management and Education, and a Masters of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner). Barbara is passionate about remote health and increasing access to services for people in remote areas.



[www.heti.nsw.gov.au](http://www.heti.nsw.gov.au)