Welcome and introduction to Menzies Science Sesh

Head of Infectious Diseases, Royal Darwin Hospital, Professor Bart Currie will open the 2013 Menzies Science Sesh and speak about Menzies and the scope of its work to get students to consider how science underpins health research and inspire participants to consider science and medical careers.

Ear health: Big Ear and Nose (BEN)

Closing the gap in ear and hearing health for Indigenous people is critical in reducing education and social disadvantage. In the Northern Territory, approximately 90 per cent of Indigenous children suffer from middle ear infections (otitis media). Approximately the length of a stretch limousine, BEN is a larger than life learning aid made from parachute material. Research nurse, Nicole Wilson will walk students through BEN’s ear canal to teach them about the various components and functionality of the ear with interactive hands-on activities and quizzes.

Brain babies building

Students will take part in two hands on activities focused on understanding human brain development in the earliest years of life. They will be asked to discuss what they believe is helpful and harmful to early development. This session will be run by Bonnie Moss, a Research Manager in the Centre for Child Development and Education at Menzies who has been working with child and family programs in the NT.

Nutrition: Making good food choices

Students will explore the reasons why people eat what they do, and compare some of the factors that affect food choice and the ability to eat a healthy diet in Darwin compared to remote Aboriginal communities. It will finish with a taste challenge. This session will be run by Dr Susie Colles is a dietician and researcher fellow with experience in community and health development, and research in remote settings in Africa and India.

Youth science sesh: Gap year students

Menzies’ 2013 Gap Year students, Chris Wevill and Yuki Ruzsicska will conduct a series of hands-on science experiments taken from their highly successful youth engagement workshops with various middle and high schools around Darwin. They will also speak about their Gap Year experience with Menzies and how others can become involved in the program.

Melioidosis - a potentially fatal bacterial disease

Melioidosis, a fatal disease caused by a bacteria that lives in the soil and surface water, is emerging as a major health threat in tropical Australia and South East Asia. Our researchers are leading the global fight against this microscopic killer. In this session students will gain an understanding of Menzies’ environmental microbiology work. This session will be run by Menzies’ Melioidosis team, with students being able to conduct hands on activities such as loading an Electrophoresis Gel, gram staining and plating soil samples onto Agar plates.