

### ***National Research Partnership to improve primary health care performance and outcomes for Indigenous peoples***

Researchers (including clinicians and post graduate students) with quantitative or qualitative analytic skills and demonstrated interest in Indigenous health may be interested in participating in the National Research Partnership which aims to improve the quality of primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The partnership is able to provide researchers with previously collected datasets derived from clinical audits. Also there may be opportunity to conduct additional empirical data collection with agreement from participating health services. The focus of the partnership is to understand the factors which influence *variation* in the quality of care (between individual clients, between practitioners, health centres/practices and regions), to *identify* potential for *quality improvement* and to *explore specific strategies* that have been effective in improving clinical performance.

Proposed research topics will need to go through internal project approval processes to ensure they address priority research questions for the partnership and meet ethical requirements. There is no funding attached to this research opportunity. However, the research partnership provides a network of researchers and health service organisations to facilitate and support high quality research and we expect this will enhance the potential to attract funding support from other sources.

#### **Key research areas:**

- Quality of care for prevention and management of chronic disease (diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease, renal and other chronic diseases)
- Quality of preventive care for healthy adults
- Quality of maternal health care
- Quality of child health care
- Quality of primary mental health care
- Quality of care for prevention and management of rheumatic heart disease
- Enhancing the quality of practice in health promotion
- Systems-based continuous quality improvement
- Application of modern quality improvement methods to other aspects of comprehensive primary health care in Indigenous communities in Australia and in low and middle income countries internationally
- Health policy in Indigenous primary health care;
- Understanding implementation of service-researcher partnerships.

#### **National Research Partnership Project Information**

##### ***Background***

Strengthening primary health care is critical to reducing health inequity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The Audit and Best practice for Chronic Disease Extension (ABCDE) project has facilitated the implementation of modern Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) approaches in Indigenous primary health care centres across Australia. The project has

demonstrated improvements in health centre systems, delivery of primary care services and in patient intermediate outcomes. It has also highlighted substantial variation in quality of care.

### Methods/Design

The data is collected in Indigenous community health centres from five States/Territories (Northern Territory, Western Australia, Far West New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland). The project is supported by a web-based information system, providing automated analysis and reporting of clinical care performance to health centre staff and management.

### Discussion

By linking researchers directly to users of research (service providers, managers and policy makers), the partnership is well placed to generate new knowledge on effective strategies for improving the quality of primary health care. By fostering effective and efficient exchange and use of information among service providers and policy makers to achieve evidence-based resource allocation, service planning, system development, and improvements of service delivery and Indigenous health outcomes.

### Further information:

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6963/10/129> BMC Health Services Research 2010, 10:129

### Contacts:

National:	Professor Ross Bailie (07) 3010-3900 Dr Gill Schierhout 0420 359357	<a href="mailto:ross.bailie@menzies.edu.au">ross.bailie@menzies.edu.au</a> <a href="mailto:gill.schierhout@menzies.edu.au">gill.schierhout@menzies.edu.au</a>
Far West NSW:	Dr Hugh Burke (02) 62953165	<a href="mailto:maarimaact@bigpond.com">maarimaact@bigpond.com</a>
Northern Territory:	Professor Tricia Nagel (08) 8922-8196	<a href="mailto:tricia.nagel@menzies.edu.au">tricia.nagel@menzies.edu.au</a>
Queensland:	Professor Sarah Larkins (08) 8922-8196	<a href="mailto:sarah.larkins@jcu.edu.au">sarah.larkins@jcu.edu.au</a>
South Australia:	Dr David Scrimgeour (08) 8132-6700	<a href="mailto:david.scrimgeour@ahcsa.org.au">david.scrimgeour@ahcsa.org.au</a>
Western Australia:	Professor Sandy Thompson (08) 9266-1856	<a href="mailto:sandra.thompson@cucrh.uwa.edu.au">sandra.thompson@cucrh.uwa.edu.au</a>

For any enquiries regarding the project in general or participation of services in other regions contact the ABCD National Research Partnership Project Manager, Cynthia Croft (email [ABCD@menzies.edu.au](mailto:ABCD@menzies.edu.au)).