

Leading kidney researcher asks for greater engagement this World Kidney Day

Wednesday, 12 March 2014

To mark World Kidney Day 2014 (Thursday, 13 March), Australia's first Indigenous kidney specialist has expressed a need for research institutes to have a greater level of engagement with the people who participate in their research efforts.

Menzies Research Fellow, Dr Jaqui Hughes pointed to Menzies' collaboration with the Top End renal patient group through the STARRS project as being critical to the feasibility and success of the project.

The STARRS project, which aims to reduce high rates of serious golden staph infections in Northern Territory dialysis patients, is a collaborative effort between Menzies' infectious diseases, renal-preventable chronic diseases and microbiology research divisions, and NT Renal Services.

Dr Hughes said that with support from the STARRS project team, the Top End renal patient group had championed the creation of the independent Renal Patient Advocacy and Advisory Committee (RAAC).

"The Committee comprises of adults from diverse communities and language groups, who are receiving dialysis or have a kidney transplant to treat severe or end-stage kidney disease," Dr Hughes said.

"Of its many notable achievements, the RAAC group has independently identified priority concerns of renal patients and gained representation in 2013 and 2014 at the National Renal Consumer group forum. This has never before been achieved."

"The Committee has already been approached to advise and support research processes in a number of project grants and other major initiatives."

Dr Hughes, a member of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology (ANZSN), said she strongly supported a funding application made to the ANZSN Infrastructure and Enabling Grant scheme valued at \$45,000.

"The grant is intended to employ an admin support officer, preferably from the well patient group, to support functions of the RAAC group, to plan and undertake whole of patient group meetings, in addition to a number of other coordination roles. It would represent a new approach from ANZSN – supporting patients to actively engage in research to make sure it addresses the patients' own priorities."

For more information about the STARRS project go to:

http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Research/Projects/Kidney/Forensic_approach_for_reservoir_identification_for_serious_S_aureus_infections_in_Top_End_dialysis_clients/

Media note:

Interviews are available with Dr Hughes. View her [researcher profile here](#).

Dr Hughes is a Jacquot Early Career Research Fellowship Recipient, awarded in January 2014. She is a member of Kidney Health Australia Kidney Check Australia Task Force, a role which provides an important opportunity to highlight kidney disease among people in the NT at a national forum.

Dr Hughes is a recipient of the 2012 NT Young Tall Poppy Award and most recently, the 2013 Top End (NT) NAIDOC Person of the Year.

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Menzies Background

Menzies School of Health Research is Australia's only Medical Research Institute dedicated to improving Indigenous health and wellbeing. We have a 28-year history of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, partnering with over 60 Indigenous communities across Northern and Central Australia. We collaborate to create resources for use in communities, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.