

## Opt In Begins!

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> September researchers Annette McCarthy and Katie Kingshott, together with Dr Jen Delima and Dr Kylie Dingwall, recruited the first patients onto the **Opt In** Trial. Since May this year, the **Opt In** team have been working closely with the Alice Springs Hospital Aboriginal Liaison Officers (ALO) and the Aboriginal Interpreting Service (AIS). Consent materials and cognitive assessments have been adapted to match the diverse language skills of Aboriginal patients. We are pleased to announce that our research materials are now available in Central Eastern Arrernte, Pitjantjatjarra, Alywarr, Warlpiri and English. Many patients have enjoyed doing cognitive tests in their first language.

Right: Acting Manager of ALOs, Christine Spencer works with Annette on Warlpiri Memory Tests. Thank you Christine!



The Menzies team have also been busy running information sessions, Grand Rounds presentations, and have placed a lot of posters around the hospital! The majority of nurses and doctors know how to refer a patient for **Opt In** and we greatly appreciate all their support in getting the study up and running. We hope that the presence of **Opt In** at the hospital will encourage health professionals to talk with patients about their “grog story” and refer the patient to the Addiction Medicine Team when higher-risk drinking is identified.

## About Opt In:

**Opt In** is a clinical trial aiming to recruit 450 patients at the Alice Springs Hospital over the next 4 years.

We are trying to find out how much Thiamine (Vitamin B1) to give to people who have symptoms of Wernicke-Kosakoff Syndrome (WKS) and to prevent high-risk drinkers from developing alcohol related brain damage.

WKS is caused by thiamine deficiency, mainly in those who misuse alcohol.

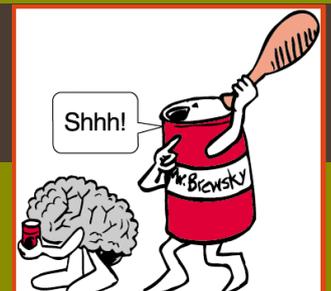
Patients in the study receive different doses of thiamine and undergo cognitive and neurological testing before and after treatment. We are looking to see what dose of thiamine leads to the most cognitive improvement.

This study has 2 groups of patients. Those who **have symptoms** of WKS and those **‘at risk’** of WKS. Diagnostic criteria for WKS includes:

**Symptoms** 2 or more: ataxia, confusion/cognitive impairment, ophthalmoplegia/nystagmus or nutritional deficiency.

**Risk factors** for WKS include: alcohol misuse, diabetes, kidney disease, sepsis, upper GIT symptoms and nutritional deficiency.

**Without treatment, Wernicke-Korsakoff Syndrome can lead to serious, long term brain damage**



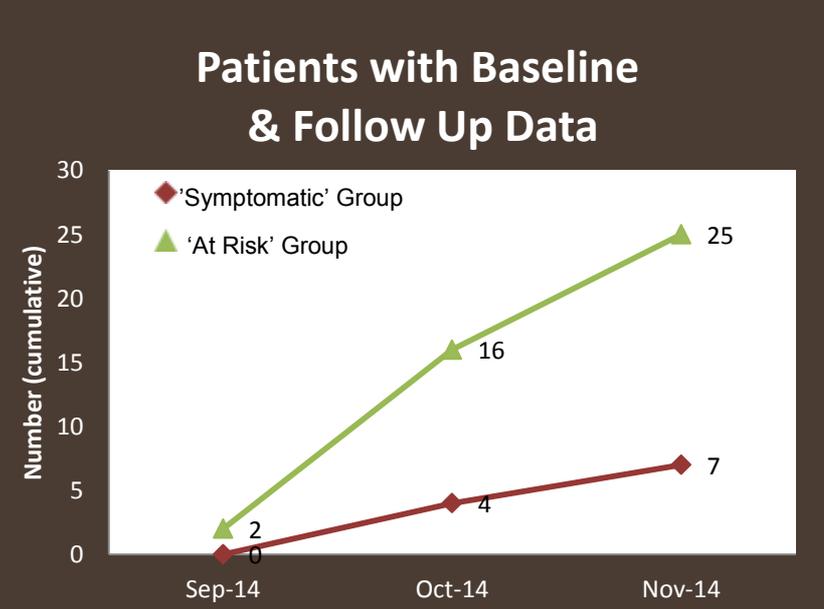
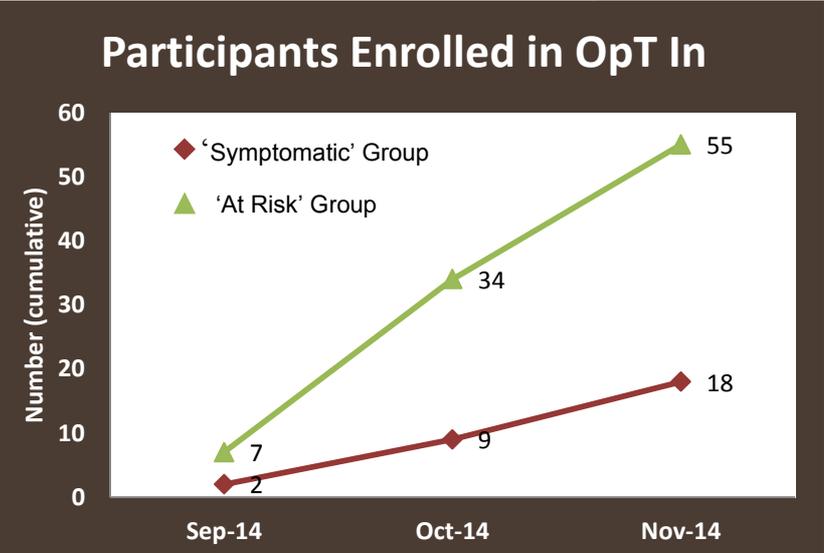
# OpT In Recruitment

Thanks to doctors and nurses, recruitment is going well for the **OpT In** Trial! The graphs below show that since September 2014 we have enrolled:

**55** people into the 'at risk' of WKS group. We collected baseline and follow up data on **25** of these participants.

**18** people into the 'symptomatic' of WKS group. We collected baseline and follow up data on **7** of these participants.

Addiction Medicine RMO Nay Tun has been essential to recruitment over the past month. Thank you Nay! Nurses John Carson, Zoe Fisher, Samantha Petric and Dr Alice Schroers have now joined the **OpT In** team so that we can recruit 7 days a week. We look forward to many more referrals!



# OpT In Indigenous Reference Group

An Indigenous Reference Group (IRG) with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working in AOD services, research and health has been set up. The IRG meets 3-4 times a year and provides cultural advice to the research team. So far, the group has given valuable input into the selection of cognitive tools and consent material, and cultural tips for communicating at the bed side. If you would like to be involved with the IRG, please email [Annette.mccarthy@menzies.edu.au](mailto:Annette.mccarthy@menzies.edu.au)

# Informed Consent is our top priority!

We have developed a DVD that explains what is involved in the trial. The DVD is a great education tool and helps patients decide whether they would like to participate or withdraw from the study. This DVD has also been translated by the AIS into four Aboriginal languages. It explains the importance of Thiamine, identifies Thiamine rich foods and highlights that too much alcohol can cause problems with memory, balance and vision.

# OpT In

will temporarily stop recruiting patients from

**22/12/14 to 4/01/15**

Have a happy and healthy Christmas!

