

NT joins global effort to combat diabetes effecting more and more mothers and babies around the world

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One of Australia's leading diabetes specialists has been awarded a research grant as part of a global effort to combat the growing incidence of type 2 diabetes.

Principal research fellow with the Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies), Associate Professor Louise Maple-Brown will share research findings from the Northern Territory (NT) with Canadian researchers thanks to a \$2 million grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) as part of the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD).

The GACD aims to reduce the global burden of type 2 diabetes and other chronic disease by coordinating research across the world. Three Australian diabetes research teams, including Assoc Prof Maple-Brown's, were awarded the grants.

NHMRC CEO Professor Anne Kelso said, "The rising prevalence of type 2 diabetes is not a health issue faced by Australia alone – it is a global problem, which is why it requires a global effort."

"The GACD grants support some of our top diabetes researchers to work with talented researchers overseas. They plan to identify new ways to prevent and treat type 2 diabetes, in low and middle income countries as well as Australia," she said.

The funding will enable Assoc Prof Maple-Brown to scale-up the already successful initiatives developed as part of the NT Diabetes in Pregnancy Partnership – here in the NT whilst also establishing these in Far North Queensland.

The extension of the study will also enable a focus on improving the health of mothers' post-partum.

Assoc Prof Maple-Brown said the ability to expand the study was critical as it would inform the design of future work for reducing the risk of future obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease in both mothers and babies.

"High blood glucose levels with type 2 diabetes in pregnancy are associated with increased risk at birth for the mother and newborn baby and can also increase the risk of your baby becoming overweight or having diabetes as a child, teenager or young adult.

"Reducing future risk for mothers, particularly if planning further pregnancies is also crucial for chronic disease management.

"This is particularly important for the NT, as rates of diabetes are very high in Indigenous Territorians. Rates are also increasing across the whole population," Assoc Prof Maple-Brown said.

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Media note:

Associate Professor Louise Maple-Brown is a principal research fellow at Menzies School of Health Research. View her profile at:

http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Our_People/Researchers/Louise_Maple-Brown/

Louise and her team will be speaking at the Australian Diabetes Society Annual Scientific Meeting and Australian Diabetes in pregnancy society conferences in Adelaide from 26 - 30 August 2015.

Collaborators:

Professor Alex Brown, South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute Limited
Dr Christine Connors, Northern Territory Department of Health
Professor Kerin O'Dea, University of South Australia
Associate Professor Jonathon Shaw, Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute Holdings Limited
Professor Jeremy Oats, University of Melbourne
Professor Paul Zimmet, Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute Holdings Limited
Associate Professor Ashim Sinha, Cairns Hospital
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Associate Professor Anthony Hanley, University of Toronto, Canada

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Menzies Background

Menzies School of Health Research is Australia's leading Medical Research Institute dedicated to improving Indigenous, global and tropical health. We have a 30 year history of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, joining with partners across the Asia-Pacific as well as Indigenous communities across northern and central Australia. We collaborate to create new knowledge, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.