

Thursday 3 September 2015

Mental health experts address health equity and access to treatment through the use of digital media

An Alice Springs health workshop has received a record number of registrations from clinicians looking for new tools that will bring mental health services to the forefront of the digital age.

e-Mental health experts from across the country have gathered in Alice Springs to attend the Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) Electronic Media and Health Forum to investigate whether electronic media can improve equity in health service delivery.

An initiative under the government funded e-Mental Health In Practice Project, Menzies Associate Professor Tricia Nagel explains that the forum has been designed to promote e-mental health services and build strong referral pathways between e-mental health and other services.

“Our strong attendance highlights enthusiasm among health professionals to hear about and use e-mental health services,” A/ Prof Nagel said.

“People in remote areas don’t have access to traditional mental health services, so this forum will showcase the potential for electronic media to promote access to treatment and health equity, as there is increasing evidence that some online programs have effectiveness similar to face-to-face forms of treatment.”

The forum will cover the AIMhi Stay Strong App that has been developed after a need was identified to assist therapists to deliver a structured, evidence based, and culturally appropriate intervention to their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

Because of this, Menzies has been developing and delivering training and support for the use of the app and other e-mental health resources for health services in the Northern Territory.

“This is the first available culturally responsive e-mental health resource to assist health practitioners to deliver evidence based treatment,” explained A/Prof Nagel.

“There is growing interest in the use of electronic media in health care delivery and the attendance in this forum is testament to that. Technology and its use in health care is new, and there is potential for e-mental health resources to promote health equity especially in remote settings,” A/Prof Nagel concluded.

The Stay Strong app is available for iPads and tablets via the Menzies website at:
http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Resources/Stay_Strong_iPad_App/

ENDS

Event Details:

Electronic Media and Health: Alice Springs Forum

Friday, 4 September 2015, 9.00 am - 1.00 pm

Lecture Theatre 1 and 2

Centre for Remote Health, Cnr Simpson and Skinner St, Alice Springs

Media note:

Associate Professor Tricia Nagel:

A/ Prof Tricia Nagel is a consultant psychiatrist who has lived and worked in the Top End of the Northern Territory for 26 years. Tricia is an associate professor at both Flinders University and the Menzies School of Health Research where she leads the Healing and Resilience division. A/ Prof Nagel has a particular interest in comorbid disorders and integration of treatment approaches for improved wellbeing outcomes in primary care. Her work encompasses the development of systems for delivery of best practice in remote and socially disadvantaged settings, mental health promotion, assessment and treatment of comorbid chronic disease and substance use, and exploration of low-intensity psychological interventions as treatment.

http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Our_People/Researchers/Tricia_Nagel/

Australian Integrated Mental Health Initiative (AIMhi):

AIMhi NT was the largest mental health project to date in the Northern Territory. It established baseline measures, explored understandings of mental health from a community perspective, developed service based strategies for improved cross cultural assessment, conducted the first Indigenous mental health clinical trial of a new brief psychotherapy, and developed a range of resources for service providers and the community, linked with a training program.

http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Research/Projects/Mental_Health_and_wellbeing/AIMhi_NT_-_Australian_Integrated_Mental_Health_Initiative/

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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.