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Kidney test hailed as groundbreaking



A SIMPLE urine test can predict the onset of kidney damage among Indigenous Australians,

according to a new study.

The groundbreaking discovery will enable earlier intervention and treatment to reduce the rate of progression of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, say the researchers.

CKD rates are three times higher in the communities than in other populations.

The research, published in the Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology, found that an increased level of a marker in urine (albumin/creatinine ratio, ACR) was a powerful predictor for the progression of CKD.

The study, led by Associate Professor Louise Maple-Brown and Dr Jaqui Hughes, from the Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies), tracked 550 Indigenous participants in 20 sites across Australia for three years.

“What is really important is that

we have now been able to show in this group of people, who have different levels of kidney health and kidney risk, the magnitude of the value of the ACR test in conjunction with the blood test,” Dr Hughes said.

The researchers say Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should undergo tests regularly from the age of 18.

“The main difficulty (with CKD) is that people could have a grumbling kidney problem for a number of years and only really become aware of it when they are quite symptomatic,” Dr Hughes said.

“That means you have lost a number of years of opportunity to help that person to remain healthy or to intervene.” – AAP