

Rheumatic heart disease focus for NT Fulbright Scholar

27 February 2018

A Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) researcher will be awarded an internationally renowned Fulbright Scholarship to help eliminate rheumatic heart disease (RHD) in Australia.

Associate Professor Anna Ralph will travel to the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) to develop institutional ties and gain experience in research methods relevant to control of RHD and tuberculosis (TB), to assist with elimination strategies for these diseases in Australia and Indonesia.

The [Fulbright Program](#) is the flagship foreign exchange scholarship program of the United States of America, aimed at increasing binational collaboration, cultural understanding, and the exchange of ideas.

“My project will draw on world-class implementation research expertise at UCSF, to help develop the elimination strategy for RHD in Australia,” Assoc Prof Ralph said.

“There is growing momentum around RHD currently, with the Federal Minister for Indigenous Health, Hon Ken Wyatt AM, convening a roundtable last week and wanting to support research efforts to control this preventable disease.

“This research will also assist in developing better TB control in remote Indigenous communities and eastern Indonesia where Menzies currently conducts TB research programs,” Assoc Prof Ralph said.

In addition to her world-class research into RHD and TB, Assoc Prof Ralph is Head of the Global Health Division at Menzies, the Clinical Director of RHD Australia, and a specialist physician in Infectious Diseases and General Medicine at Royal Darwin Hospital. The Fulbright fellowship will allow links between Menzies and UCSF to be forged, and broaden international networks to benefit future Menzies researchers.

Since 1949, the Australian-American Fulbright Commission has enabled over 5,000 students, scholars and professionals to travel between the two countries for study and research.

Assoc Prof Ralph will be taking up the fellowship during 2019.

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Media contact:

Associate Prof Ralph is available for interview – high resolution image available. The award presentation is being held in Canberra tonight (27-02-2018). Associate Prof Ralph is available for interview

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Menzies School of Health Research

Menzies School of Health Research is one of Australia's leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving Indigenous, global and tropical health. Menzies has a history of over 30 years 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. Menzies collaborates to create new knowledge, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.