

Fifth wave of research to roll out across the Top End

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Australia's largest and longest running study of Aboriginal people, the Aboriginal Birth Cohort Study (ABC), has commenced its fifth wave of data collection.

The ABC study, conducted by the Life Course Studies team at Menzies School of Health Research, has been following 686 babies from birth onwards, with a plan to follow them through sickness and health for the rest of their lives.

The ABC study has been visiting the study participants every 6-7 years, where a range of biomedical and social themes are explored. These relate to chronic disease such as diabetes, kidney and heart disease and includes mental health.

A/Professor Gurmeet Singh, Chief Investigator, says that the main aim is to relate early life health to later health and disease.

"These longitudinal studies are looking for the earliest signs of chronic disease in those most at risk and noting the age at which these appear.

This early identification will help to tailor interventions for key groups and at the most appropriate time to get maximum benefit from the therapies.

The study commenced in 1987 and has been monitoring the health of babies through childhood, their teen years and now well into their adulthood.

This fifth follow-up wave, which has just commenced, will continue to follow the progress of these 686 people, as well as the 196 non-Indigenous participants of the Top End Cohort (TEC) who are now adults aged 28 to 32 years.

Young people in these studies will undergo a comprehensive health check including body measurements, ultrasounds, blood pressure, blood and urine tests, emotional wellbeing assessments, and for the first time in the study, eye tests," said A/Prof Singh.

The Menzies research team will begin their data collection in Darwin and then continue to the places of residence of the participants in over 40 urban and remote communities across the Top End during the next two years.

For more information on the study, or to find out when the team will be visiting communities, please contact the study team - abcstudy@menzies.edu.au or tecstudy@menzies.edu.au.

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Menzies School of Health Research

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