

## Welcome

The eGFR Study is a longitudinal study of kidney health in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Since the baseline study (2007-2011), we have been working with communities and clinicians across 5 regions of Australia.



**In this edition of eGFR Study News, we summarise the key 2019 activities of the study team.** In 2019 our team included Dr Hughes as the eGFR Study leader and Dr Athira Rohit as the eGFR Study project coordinator.

The eGFR Study team continued to develop research knowledge from the eGFR Follow-up study health assessment of 2012-2014.

We provided updates on eGFR Study activities to ethics committees, and prepared and submitted a major funding application for the 10-year follow-up, which we called the eGFR3 Study.

We also shared knowledge about kidney health and chronic kidney disease with Indigenous communities and clinicians.

### Developing Research Knowledge

Using data from the eGFR Follow-up study health assessment:

Dr Elizabeth Barr explored links between chronic inflammation, detected by a blood test, and change in kidney function.

Dr William Majoni, in his PhD research, explored relationships between liver function blood test results and change in kidney function, and

Dr Hughes and Associate Professor Barzi explored the relationship of socioeconomic status and change in kidney function. These analyses will move into reporting phases in early 2020, including journal publication.

**Information about the eGFR study is found on the Menzies website at <https://bit.ly/2vU6Lu1>**

## 2019 Annual Report

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### In this issue:

Welcome	1
Developing Knowledge	1
Ethics Committee updates	1
Developing the eGFR3 Study	2
Governance	2
Research questions	2
Funding News	2
Knowledge Sharing	2
Upcoming Activities	2

### Ethics Committee updates

During 2019, Dr Athira Rohit updated all ethics committees. The eGFR Study has maintained ethics approval in all the study regions since the study began in the Top-End Northern Territory in 2007.

In 2019 we learned about:

- New ethics committees and research governance processes in the Thursday Island region.
- New governance processes for data linkage projects within health services.

The eGFR Study are committed to working with these governance and ethics processes with our regional partners.

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## Developing the eGFR3 Study

During 2018-2019, the eGFR Study team consulted with our study partners, including community members and clinicians.

We agreed we needed to:

- answer questions about long-term kidney health and kidney function.
- visit everyone again for a third kidney health assessment, and
- ask for individual permission to also use information related to kidney health which is already stored in other administrative data sets to answer the kidney health study research questions (see below)
- create a study governance model involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership with representatives from the 5 regions in community and clinical leadership working with the research leadership.
- Apply for 5 years of funding

**In early May 2019, we represented these priorities in a major research funding application to the National Health and Medical Research Council Cohort Grant Scheme.**

### 2019 Funding News

On the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019, we learned the eGFR3 Study research funding application was awarded a five-year award (2020-2024) from the NHMRC Cohort Grant scheme.

Funding for other eGFR Study activities during 2019 included Menzies Small Grant and Diabetes Australia Research Program grant.



*Photo: Clockwise from top left- Mr Sam Mills RN, Mrs Mary Ward (Thursday Island Kidney Health Community Lecture, November 2019), Dr Jaqui Hughes with Mrs Helen Fejo-Frith, who was the recipient of the Top-End NAIDOC 2019 Elder of the Year, Dr Jaqui Hughes and Dr Elizabeth Barr at the Tiwi Land Council Offices, 2019.*

### **eGFR3 Study- 4 key research questions**

- What is the long-term change in kidney function since the first kidney health assessment in 2007-2011?
- Was there any major change in kidney function for people who were healthy, or had diabetes, or had mild-moderate kidney damage since the first kidney health assessment?
- What are common reasons people with kidney disease access hospital care?
- What are the impacts of an Indigenous-led eGFR3 Study governance model for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kidney health?

### eGFR Study Knowledge Sharing

We released the eGFR Study summary video <https://vimeo.com/323352843> in 2019 and are working on a second video explaining kidney health action advice.

We shared eGFR Study kidney health information with the Tiwi Land Council and in a Kidney Health Community Lecture in Thursday Island (November 2019).

The eGFR Study team supported medical workforce training, by presenting study information to the Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia (Adelaide, 24 August 2019) and the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association Annual Scientific Conference (Darwin, 4 October 2019).

### Upcoming Activities

We will...

- Inform all eGFR study communities of the study funding announcement.
- Advertise, interview and appoint eGFR3 Study team members, including the project manager.
- Seek expression of interest for membership of community governance and clinician governance groups.
- Commence study recruitment after the study protocols and ethics applications have been submitted and approved.