

Understanding the intergenerational impact of diabetes: a key part to improving care across the lifecourse

30 August 2024

Understanding the intergenerational impact of diabetes will be discussed at today's DIABETES across the LIFECOURSE: Northern Australia Partnership (the Partnership) 13th Annual Educational Symposium, held at Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies).

This comes as new funding was recently allocated to Menzies to further investigate this critical issue as part of the Pregnancy and Neonatal Diabetes Outcomes in Remote Australia (PANDORA) study, which has been following the health outcomes for mothers and their babies in the Northern Territory (NT) since 2012.

This next phase of the PANDORA study, led by Chief Investigator and Menzies Senior Research Fellow, Dr Anna Wood was funded by Medical Research Future Fund Targeted Translation Research Accelerator (MRFF TTRA) initiative (\$972 393), to undertake this work over the next 2 years.

The new funding will allow the team to examine early life predictors of diabetes and obesity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth as well as novel determinants of diabetic kidney disease among women within the established PANDORA cohort. It will also involve a Wave 3 pilot study to lay the groundwork for the next important wave of this cohort when the children will be entering puberty.

Since commencing 12 years ago, the PANDORA study has followed NT mothers and their babies to better understand the outcomes of diabetes in pregnancy for both women and their children. Women were recruited to the study during pregnancy and pregnancy and birth outcomes were measured. Women and their children were then followed up at 1.5- 6 years (Wave 1) and then at 5-12 years (Wave 2). Wave 2 is currently underway and is due for completion at the end of the year.

Today, the Partnership is joined by 250 diabetes experts, health professionals and stakeholders from across the NT and Far North Queensland, at Symposium event sites in Darwin, Alice Springs, Cairns and online. Participants will hear from a range of speakers including clinicians specialising in diabetes during pregnancy and youth type 2 diabetes, as well as from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members with lived experiences.

Two international key-note speakers will also share their insights. Professor Kristen Nadeau (University of Colorado, USA) will speak on her work in reducing complications for youth-onset diabetes and Professor Helen Murphy (University of East Anglia, UK) will present on critical diabetes in pregnancy research.

For more about the Symposium, visit [the Diabetes Across the Lifecourse website](#).

Quotes attributable to Lead of the DIABETES across the LIFECOURSE: Northern Australia Partnership and Menzies Principal Research Fellow, [Associate Professor Renae Kirkham](#):

"PANDORA is a unique and critically important longitudinal birth cohort that aims to better understand disease pathways across generations. This new phase of funding will not only

enhance our understanding of the early life predictors of diabetes and obesity, but also inform new targeted strategies to address the diabetes epidemic and its impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.”

Quotes attributable to Chair of the DIABETES across the LIFECOURSE: Northern Australia Partnership’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group and Menzies Senior Research Officer, [Sian Graham](#):

“We are committed to working in true partnership with health professionals and communities to provide appropriate support and clinical management of diabetes. Our 2024 Educational Symposium features lived experience and interactive expert panel discussions. In the afternoon, our workshops will focus on the sustainability of diabetes prevention and management.”

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Menzies School of Health Research

Menzies is one of Australia’s leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and a leader in global and tropical health research. Menzies continues to translate research into effective partnerships and programs in communities across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.