TITLE: Enhancing Ataxia Care in Non-Dominant Cultures: Reflections on patient care and research models of the MJDF

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**ABSTRACT:**

The MJD Foundation provides comprehensive case management and support to Australian Aboriginal people living with SCA3/MJD and SCA7 across remote north Australia. These families are a minority culture in Australia, who face challenges accessing quality health care, resulting in well-documented health disparity. The additional burden of long-term, genetic degenerative disease confers an even higher risk of poor health outcomes.

We have developed a model grounded in cultural competency, acknowledging the importance of understanding diverse worldviews and practices and addressing the social determinants of health to foster effective engagement and overcome barriers to access. The MJDF has implemented an integrated therapy program and recently commenced place-based multidisciplinary clinics led by a neurologist in remote communities.

Research is an important part of the MJDF integrated model, and we have conducted, partnered, and collaborated on research that considers sleep, rehabilitation, physical activity, strategies to maximise engagement, the collaborative development of aided augmentative and alternative (AAC) system, and the utility of assisted reproductive technology.

This presentation will outline the model's clinical and research activities and outcomes, which serve as a blueprint for culturally responsive care and emphasises collaboration, empowerment, and inclusivity.