

EXTREME SEXUAL HEALTH - CAPE YORK. THE TALE SO FAR...

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Background/Purpose:

From 2014 - 2016, Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service received funding to improve sexual health services and develop a public health response due to an increase in infectious syphilis notifications among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15-39 years. In 2017 the North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander STI Action Plan 2016-2021 was introduced.

Clinical co-ordination and supporting partnerships, support working with individual communities to increase screening, education and capacity building of clinicians has led to a drop in notifications between 2015- 2018.

Approach:

Five teams provide regular outreach to 10 remote Indigenous communities. The need for social and emotional support that comes from building trusting, culturally appropriate relationships within communities has led to focused sexual health service provision and improvement of sexual health outcomes for clients.

We will demonstrate how co-operation and co-ordination between the Men's, Women's and Sexual Health Program (MWSHP), Primary Health Care Centres, Apunipima Cape York Health Council, Tropical Public Health Services, Royal Flying Doctor Service, local Councils and community groups has created unity in a shared cause. Ongoing maintenance of the strands in this rope is required to continue providing good outcomes to our Cape communities.

Outcomes/Impact:

We will report on the progress to meeting the goals of the Action Plan. The importance of community approval is key to building trust, normalizing sexual health and breaking down "shame" barriers within its' population. Reliability and consistency are demonstrated in our data to support better sexual health outcomes. We will discuss the social barriers to service and how community engagement, problem solving and education helps achieve these positive outcomes.

Innovation and Significance:

Detail will be provided on how funding and a flexible workforce, has contributed to improved sexual health outcomes for these varied communities.

Disclosure of Interest Statement (example):

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