

CREATING PATHWAYS FOR INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS TO LEAD THE WAY IN ALCOHOL RESEARCH

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Introduction / Issues:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) communities report alcohol as a high priority issue. Alcohol contributes to poor mental and physical health, injury and death among Indigenous Australians. Drinking problems can also have a major effect on families and communities. However there is a national shortage of Indigenous Australian researchers with expertise in the prevention and treatment of alcohol problems. This means that it is harder to have research that is appropriately designed, delivered and interpreted.

Approach:

Plans for the Centre and mechanisms to support Indigenous postgraduate students, early career researchers, research trainees and assistants will be described by a Chief Investigator, Adjunct Associate Professor Scott Wilson, who is also Chair of the Centre's Indigenous Advisory Committee.

Key Findings:

This Centre brings together health service, cultural and research expertise to assist the recruitment, training and support of Aboriginal researchers. It will generate new knowledge, integrating efforts along the continuum of prevention and treatment for unhealthy drinking and alcohol use, in the real life setting of mental and physical comorbidity health needs, family and community and government policy.

Discussions and Conclusions:

The studies supported by the Centre will include the full spectrum of action: from community-based prevention, through primary care-based treatment, through to residential treatment and harm reduction. By supporting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people with an interest in research, to find their way in that field, they can develop the skills and networks to become independent researchers.

Implications for Practice or Policy (optional):

The Centre plans to create a research agenda based on the priorities of Indigenous health professionals and communities, and that is informed by what is known through research already. Research that has practical and policy implications will be a priority.