

Establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Coalition in Far North Queensland to develop Precision Public Health intervention's that reduce the prevalence of STIs in local communities.

Authors:

Mitchell S¹, Honeysett C¹

¹ UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health

Background:

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are a major problem in remote and regional communities in Australia, particularly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially young people residing in Far North Queensland. Unaddressed, these threats will increase substantially in coming decades.

True community-control of Indigenous health research is uncommon, with research agendas usually set by investigators and community members involved in an advisory capacity only.

Methods:

IMPACT-STI will adopt a multi- disciplinary precision public health approach to addressing sexually transmissible infections (STIs) in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Far North Queensland identified through a multi-layered dataset.

Local data will be layered across:

- Health services research
- STI genomics
- Social determinants of health
- STI notifications
- Hospital adverse outcomes

The data will be mapped to identify STI hotspots and populations at risk highlighting the drivers of STI transmission within these locations.

A Community Coalition (comprised of local community members from each impact location) will take on a leadership role and work in genuine partnership with researchers throughout, ensuring research activities align with community priorities and ultimately making decisions on which interventions should be evaluated.

Results:

The findings will support the community coalition to design and evaluate interventions that aim to reduce prevalence and improve management of STIs in Far North Queensland.

Conclusion:

Indigenous research methodologies underpin the study to contribute towards the self-determination and decolonising initiatives amongst the people it will affect the most. This work outlines an approach to Indigenous health research where community representatives take on a central decision-making role rather than being involved only in an advisory capacity. Findings will inform others looking for better

ways to involve communities in research and ultimately achieve better project outcomes.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

No pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this study. The research staff involved in this study have no perceived or actual conflicts of interest in the study.