

# THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN IMPROVING SEXUAL HEALTH AWARENESS AMONG ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN REGIONAL AND REMOTE AUSTRALIA

## Authors:

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## Background/Purpose:

Since 2011, there has been a sustained outbreak of infectious syphilis among young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (hereafter Aboriginal) people in remote areas of northern and central Australia. The outbreak has amassed over 2000 diagnosis, including 6 neonatal deaths and it occurs in the context of disproportionate prevalence and incidence of other bacterial STIs. Despite reported significant use of social media among people living in remote areas, the use of social media in health promotion among this population is largely untested.

## Approach:

In response we developed and implemented a multifaceted syphilis awareness-raising and testing campaign called 'Young, Deadly, Syphilis Free' (YDSF). The campaign included television commercials, radio advertisements, and a multifaceted social media strategy using YouTube, Facebook, Divas Chat, Instagram and website. We report on the social media approach and impact for initial period of 9 months 1st July 2017 to 31st March 2018.

## Outcomes/Impact:

The YDSF Facebook page was a successful platform in helping reach our target group of young people (52% aged 18-34 years) and living in remote areas (32% of all users). Facebook received 450 Page likes, a reach of 139,870 people and total of 10,217 engaged users. Most popular posts to this page were videos, animations and infographics. The DivasChat instant messaging chat service also proved popular in promoting the overall campaign with nearly 15 million impressions and 13,704 ad server clicks to our Facebook Page and website. Instagram and YouTube were least popular in promoting the campaign. Overall, the YDSF social media campaign was engaged with 31,673 times. Our website had 19,485 page views and 2,870 individual users.

## Innovation and Significance:

The YDSF social media campaign is the first to engage remote young Aboriginal people with messages about sexual health and demonstrates the potential for using social media in future campaigns.

## Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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