

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN RESEARCH

Authors:

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Background/Purpose:

The ENDING-STI and IMPACT-STI projects adopt a multi-disciplinary precision public health approach to addressing sexually transmissible infections (STIs) in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across three regional and remote study sites in Queensland and Northern Territory. Partnerships with community members are pivotal to the projects' success.

Approach:

Broadly representative groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community advisors have been established, supported by a local Indigenous research coordinator in each study site. Differences in geography, local context and cultural considerations have necessitated a different approach to community involvement in each region. Capacity development opportunities support members' ability to contribute to decision-making and ensure people are left with skills beyond the projects' lifetime.

Outcomes/Impact:

Community advisors have facilitated engagement with the broader communities, advised on qualitative data collection methodology, provided local context and interpretation of data and suggested ideas for action to address STIs in their communities. Advisors provide crucial oversight to ensure research activities align with community priorities and through a codesign process, will make the ultimate decisions on which interventions should be trialled and evaluated in their communities.

Innovation and Significance:

This approach to conducting research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities recognises the rights of community members to self-determination and control of research that affects them. The work also acknowledges the benefits that involvement of community members may bring to research implementation and outcomes.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

No conflicts of interest to declare.