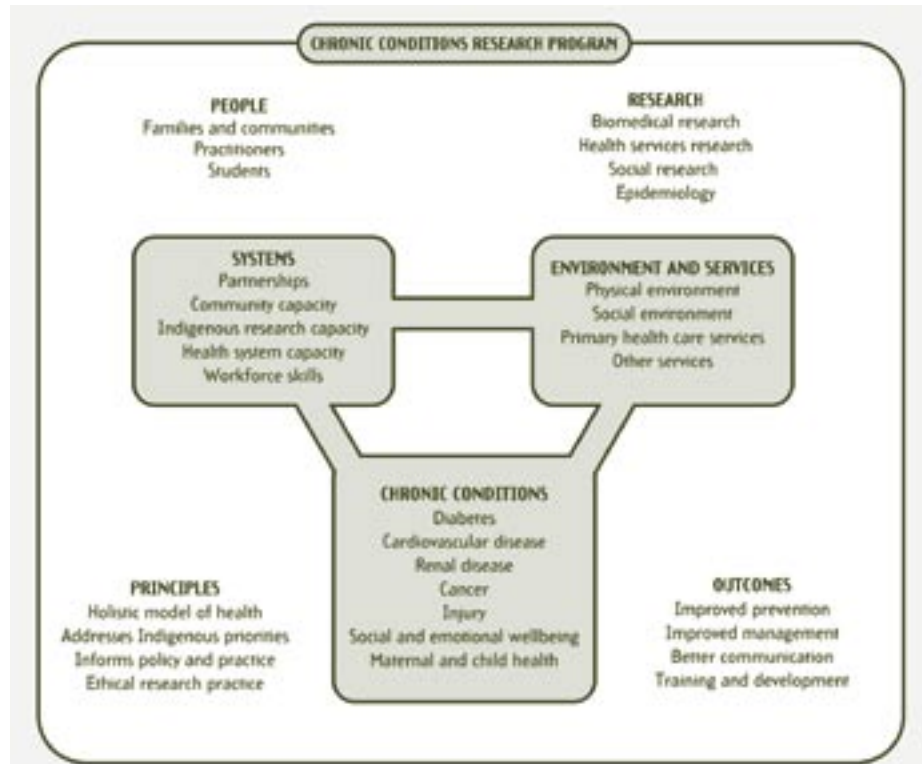


Chronic Conditions Program

Program Goal:

The goal of the program is to reduce the impact of chronic conditions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by improving chronic disease prevention, early detection and management services and strategies.

The range of components that make up the Chronic Conditions Program



Program Overview

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health has already developed a comprehensive body of knowledge around chronic conditions. This program aims to provide further evidence to policy makers and service providers by bringing together that knowledge, building on it and sharing it in ways that better informs policy and practice.

Research Priorities

The priorities for this program were developed from an industry roundtable meeting involving the community controlled health sector and other organisations providing services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander peoples. These were then ranked by the CRCAH Board according to where research could have the most impact. The resulting priorities are:

- Aboriginal constructions of health: implications for service provision, resourcing and health indicators
- Chronic disease self-management: understanding the barriers and facilitators to effective uptake of health promotion and self-management messages
- A cross-program project on research transfer into policy and practice
- Men's health
- Smoking

- Health economics of chronic diseases
- Service mix
- Improved access to cardiovascular disease services
- Nutrition.

Priority Research Projects

Several project proposals were developed to meet these priorities, undergoing a rigorous quality assurance process. This process had strong involvement from Aboriginal health services and government,

Research Projects Relevant to Area of Priority / Research Focus

Research focus areas	Project number	Title	Project Leader	Potential outcomes/lessons
Chronic disease self-management	217	Structured systems approach to improving health promotion practice for chronic disease in Indigenous communities	Ross Bailie, Menzies School of Health Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The aim of the project is to develop and trial a structured systems approach to improving health promotion practice in and with Indigenous communities.
	98	Point-of-Care in Aboriginal Hands	Mark Shephard, Flinders University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Point-of-Care Testing (POCT) program delivers POCT services for chronic disease prevention and management to rural and remote Aboriginal medical services in Australia.
	94	IMPAKT: Improving Access to Kidney Transplants	Alan Cass, The George Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IMPAKT has looked at how health systems in different Australian states and territories provide transplant services to patients. The study recommends a model useful in considering the care and treatment options of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.
	54	DRUID: Diabetes and related disorders in urban Indigenous people in the Darwin region	Joan Cunningham, Menzies School of Health Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The DRUID study will increase our knowledge on the burden of diabetes and its complications among Indigenous people in urban areas, and how to reduce it.
	135	The Relevance of an Accredited Australian Diabetes Educators Association Course to AHWs, Supervisors and Aboriginal People in SA	Meri King, Flinders University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An evaluation was completed on the impact of the first accredited ADEA course on AHWs and their delivery of diabetes health services to Aboriginal people.
Smoking & cardio-vascular health	192	HPV Vaccine and the Indigenous Community Intentions to Vaccinate Pre-Adolescent Children: What do Indigenous People Think of Giving a Vaccine to Children to Prevent Cancer of the Cervix	Margaret Heffernan, University of Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal participation in this project resulted in high levels of uptake of the HPV vaccine and the development of culturally appropriate resources.
	55	AATAAC : Finding a Better Treatment for Ear Disease	Peter Morris, Menzies School of Health Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project will assess the effectiveness of treatment options for Aboriginal children with severe acute otitis media.
	216	Monitoring and Evaluating Aboriginal Tobacco Control	David Thomas, Menzies School of Health Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has established a monitoring and feedback system using tobacco consumption data. The outcomes of the research will add important new evidence about Indigenous perceptions of smoking and evaluations of tobacco control interventions.
	190	Centre of Excellence for Indigenous Tobacco Control	Viki Briggs, University of Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CETC aims to increase knowledge about tobacco control and consults widely to ensure communities have an opportunity to inform Indigenous tobacco control policy.
	96	Predictive models and interventions for coronary heart disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Kevin Rowley, University of Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project is a longitudinal study which establishes that despite national trends, the Utopia Homelands communities have achieved successful prevention of chronic conditions and a lower mortality rate than expected for an Aboriginal community in the NT.
Men's health	219	Mibbinbah (Men's Places)	Rick Hayes & Jack Bulman, La Trobe University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The aims of the project include understanding what makes Indigenous men's sheds/spaces 'safe' and 'healthy' places for men, how this might benefit families and communities, and whether men's shed/spaces can contribute to chronic conditions prevention/care.
Health economics	114	<i>Kanyirrimpa</i> : Health, masculinity and wellbeing of desert Aboriginal men	Brian McCoy, La Trobe University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project explored what a group of Aboriginal men from the desert understand by the term 'health'.
	185	Developing, sustaining and evaluating health programs for Aboriginal men	Brian McCoy, La Trobe University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project is about Aboriginal men developing 'programs' that reflect their understanding of 'health'.
	149	Avoidable Disease Burden and Cost Effectiveness of Prevention (Ace Prevention)	Ian Anderson, University of Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project will examine a range of interventions and assess their cost-effectiveness.
Maternal health	242	Talking about Maternity & Postnatal Care with Aboriginal Families in Victoria & South Australia	Stephanie Brown, University of Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project will work with Aboriginal organisations in Victoria and South Australia, that will produce information to improve maternal care for Aboriginal mothers in Aboriginal and mainstream health services, and also develop the skills of Aboriginal researchers.
	127	Pneumum: Vaccination for Aboriginal Babies and Ear Disease	Ross Andrews, Menzies School of Health Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has the potential to demonstrate an added benefit of vaccination for pregnant mothers, so that mothers may choose to protect themselves and protect their babies from ear disease.
	65	Developing health information systems to support Continuous Quality Improvement in antenatal care for Aboriginal women	Gai Wilson, La Trobe University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing culturally relevant indicators and data systems supporting CQI in antenatal care for Aboriginal women.

to make sure that the research is relevant and applicable in real life situations. The projects developed included:

1. A structured systems approach to improving health promotion practice for chronic disease in Indigenous communities

Ross Bailie, Menzies School of Health Research

Despite increasing evidence on the effectiveness of health promotion, less is known about the degree to which this evidence can be applied in Indigenous settings. There is also increasing emphasis on the importance of a systems approach for contemporary health promotion. Experience working within a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) framework has contributed significantly to systems development in health services, yet health promotion has not made great use of modern quality methods.

The primary goal of this project is to improve the implementation of comprehensive health promotion by using a CQI model to build systems capacity in remote Australian Indigenous communities. Informed by the socio-ecological approach and principles of participatory action research, the focus is on

the community and organisational processes that are essential for effective health promotion.

This project builds on the success of the Audit and Best Practice for Chronic Disease (ABCD) project where results have highlighted that with an appropriately designed CQI model, systems capacity can be enhanced leading to improvements in the delivery of clinical services in Indigenous communities.

2. Monitoring Aboriginal tobacco control

David Thomas, Menzies School of Health Research

Smoking remains a major pathway to poorer health outcomes for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people are much more likely than other Australians to smoke. Aboriginal smoking rates have not declined, even though there has been a steady national decline over the past 30 years.

The sale of tobacco at community stores provides a useful opportunity for less obtrusive monitoring of tobacco consumption in many remote Aboriginal communities.

This validated method can be used to assess the impact of community-level tobacco control health promotion activities, and to monitor progress in tobacco control for government policy

makers, community organisations, and practitioners.

The 'Monitoring Aboriginal Tobacco Control' research project has three broad elements:

- Establish a monitoring and feedback system using tobacco consumption data.
- Commence a quantitative research program using tobacco consumption data.
- Commence a qualitative research program using interviews about quitting, smoking, and tobacco control interventions.

3. Mibbinbah (Men's Places)

Rick Hayes and Jack Bulman, La Trobe University

Mibbinbah can be thought of as two distinct but related projects. The first is a pilot project which seeks to evaluate existing Indigenous men's sheds/spaces through the employment of local Indigenous male Project Associates. These Project Associates will be trained in the use of participatory action-research methods that will help in developing and sustaining these sheds/spaces during the research program. Further training in Indigenous leadership, community communication and media, and computer and internet



A Quality Assurance workshop held in Melbourne as part of the development of the Mibbinbah (Men's Places) project

skills, will enhance sustainability. The second project will seek to understand if and why participation in chronic conditions programs by Indigenous males is improved through association with 'safe' and 'well-facilitated' Indigenous men's sheds/spaces. The pilot phase will involve up to seven sites across Australia.

4. Chronic conditions management strategies in Aboriginal communities

Inge Kowanko, Malcolm Battersby and Peter Harvey, Flinders University

This project builds on previous and current work of the Centre for Clinical Research and Excellence (CCRE) in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health. The CCRE is a collaboration of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers from the Aboriginal

Health Council of South Australia and Flinders University.

The project will look at the chronic condition management strategies that three participating services currently use, find out what works well for them and why, and what systems and supports are required. Then, according to the priorities of the participating Aboriginal health services and available resources, services will be offered the opportunity to take up additional strategies (e.g. care plans supported by MBS funding) and the impact of these developments evaluated.

Recent and Current Projects and Activity

The Chronic Conditions Program has 43 projects, including CRCAH funded projects and in-kind projects from our partner organisations. Some of these projects are outlined in the table on page 2.

For More Information

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Aboriginal Health Worker and clinic coordinator Gwenda Gless and former CRCAH Program Leader and OATSIH director Brendan Gibson at the industry roundtable that set identified priorities for research in the Chronic Conditions Program



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