Starting early: prevention & early intervention

Annalee Stearne

Professor Sherry Saggers (Project Leader)
Prevention, early intervention & inequality

- Aims to address health and wellbeing issues in diverse populations, complementing and extending the work of the Indigenous Research team and other NDRI research, & conducted in collaboration with other universities and organisations.

- Funding: diverse combination of national competitive grants, competitive tenders, industry-funded collaborative grants, NHMRC post-doctoral fellowships.

- Established in 2008 with a 4-year grant from Curtin University, to build on existing research.
Staff

- Professor Sherry Saggers – Project Leader
- Dr Lynn Roarty – Research Fellow
- Dr Kate Frances – Research Fellow
- Dr Nyanda McBride – Senior Research Fellow
- Dr Colleen O’Leary – NHMRC Post-doctoral fellow
- Ms Jeannie Roberts – Research Fellow (KAMSC, Broome)
- Ms Beatriz Cuesta Briand – PhD student
- Supervision of RAs in WA, QLD, NSW
- Collaborative research within NDRI with Professor Dennis Gray, A/Professor Ted Wilkes, Dr Mandy Wilson, Ms Anna Stearne & Mr Michael Doyle
Background

• International research on impacts of environments on early brain development

• Situating health in a social context

• Social determinants of health and substance misuse – multi-level & occur throughout the life course

• Primary prevention – identifying factors which prevent problematic substance use at all ages. Education & family support are primary determinants of health and life chances.
Social determinants of health & AOD use
Research focus:

- The impact of early intervention among disadvantaged populations; particular the way in which attention to maternal health and wellbeing, child health and early learning ameliorates socio-economic disadvantage and leads to more positive futures;

- Child-centred, family and community interventions and their role in improving health and social outcomes, such as school retention and employability;

- Social inequalities and their impact on health outcomes; and

- Models of leadership and community development in indigenous and non-Indigenous communities which draw upon diverse theoretical and methodological approaches and incorporate understandings from many disciplines.
Methodological & ethical issues

- Material circumstances of people’s lives & the meanings they make from them require combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

- Suspicion of research among marginalised people requires attention to participatory approaches, e.g. working with research-practitioners.

- Authentic research collaboration requires exchange of knowledge and skills between researchers and the researched.
Research projects

- Evaluation of the Communities for Children initiatives for children and families in the East Kimberley
- **Evaluation of Warlpiri Early Childhood Care and Development Program**
- Evaluation of Yarning and Parenting program
- School Harm Reduction
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) knowledge and referral pathways in early childhood settings
- National Indigenous Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Resource Project
- A Population-Based Data Linkage Cohort Western Australian Mothers with an Alcohol Diagnosis, NHMRC – Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship
- Kalgoorlie Alcohol Action Plan
- Improved services for people with drug and alcohol problems and mental illness initiative
- Culture, context & risk: Socio-cultural influences on the sexual health of Indigenous young people
- Health inequalities and chronic disease: Barriers to effective disease management for people living with Type 2 diabetes
- Social inclusion through community embedded, socially supported university education
- Pandemic influenza containment strategies in Aboriginal communities
- Feasible containment strategies for H1N1 in Indigenous communities
Case study: Warlpiri Early Childhood Care & Development Program

Background:
Warlpiri Education & Training Trust funding key areas of development in four communities (2009–11)

The goal of the Warlpiri ECCD is to:
Improve the health and wellbeing of children aged 0–5 years by building a foundation for children to reach their social, intellectual, spiritual and physical needs through the support of parents and carers and better early childhood services, in four Warlpiri Communities
Case study: Warlpiri Early Childhood Care & Development Program

Outcomes of the program are to:

• Provide the four Warlpiri communities with an appropriate training and support program for parents and carers
• Increase the capacity of existing EC centres to implement quality programs in ECCD
• Increased community capacity to effectively govern ECC programs
• Improved reflection and learning amongst the ECCD sector in Indigenous Australia
Case study: Warlpiri Early Childhood Care & Development Program

Community indicators

*Kurdu pirjirdi nyinanjaku manu yungurlu pina jarri*

[Kids to stay strong and learn well]

*Jarnku warra warra kanjaku manu yulkanjaku*

[Kids to take care of each other; to love each other]

*Kajirla ngati-nyanurlu yinyi mangari manu kuyu nggulaju kapu ngurrji nyinami manu pina-jarrimi manu warrki-jarri manu kajili ngunamiwuraji-ngirli ngulaju kapulu kakarra pardimi ngurrju*

[If mother gives bread or damper and meat then they will stay strong and will work and if they sleep early they will get up strong and well].
Case study: Warlpiri Early Childhood Care & Development Program

External indicators

School: student attendance, and the qualitative indicators include: turn taking; listening; sitting; following simple instructions; and age appropriate focus on activities.

Health: Including trends for children for failure to thrive and Otitis media, and for mothers include maternal nutrition and smoking.

Stores: one store in each community stocks and promotes healthy snacks for young children; and will be indicated by the percentage of fresh food purchases to total food purchases from local stores.
Policy directions

- Develop more robust evidence base for early intervention – impact on social determinants such as education, and also substance use directly (e.g. use of AEDI)

- Knowledge translation activities – linking research to policy around the early years and promoting importance to substance prevention

- Establishing early intervention (early years) on the AOD policy agenda
Western Australian Mothers with an Alcohol Diagnosis 1983–2007

• Aim: to examine the effects of maternal alcohol use disorder on the offspring.
• Methods: Data Linkage Study
• Mothers with a birth recorded on the Midwives Notification System and their offspring born between 1983–2007
• Exposed: women with an alcohol diagnosis & their offspring
• Comparison: women without an alcohol diagnosis & their offspring
• Outcomes: Health, Developmental, Social
School Health and Alcohol Harm Reduction Project (SHAHRP)

- **Formative development** of SHAHRP encompassing research evidence and target group involvement
- **Longitudinal assessment** of SHAHRP intervention
- **Dissemination** of the SHAHRP intervention at national and international levels
- **Replication** of SHAHRP research in Northern Ireland – reinforce positive behavioural results