

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Indigenous Health Outcomes Patient Evaluation (IHOPE)

Professor Louisa Jorm, Ms Sandra Lujic and Ms Deborah Randall from the School of Medicine, Professor Alastair Leyland from the MRC Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, Dr Timothy Churches from the NSW Department of Health, Dr Mary Haines from the Sax Institute and Professor Sandra Eades from the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute are researching inequalities of Aboriginal health, through the comparison of hospital care for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This research was funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

'The health status of Indigenous people is worse than that of non-Indigenous people across every possible health indicator' says Professor Jorm. 'We will explore three critical issues through this research: how the health system itself may contribute to Indigenous inequalities; how Indigenous health combines with socioeconomic status and access to services to generate inequalities; and whether the health status of Indigenous people contributes to further health disadvantages'.

The Indigenous Health Outcomes Patient Evaluation (IHOPE) team will analyse data available through the NSW Admitted Patient Data Collection, which holds all records for NSW private and public hospital patients. The focus will be on residents of NSW who were hospitalised between July 2000 and June 2007 with any one of a number of diagnoses: ischaemic heart disease, stroke, heart failure, type 2 diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or asthma. Hospital records will be linked to death records by the Centre for Health Record Linkage and coded according to where the patient lived.

The IHOPE project is using a technique called multilevel modelling. This takes into account the fact



that groups of individuals are related because they have, for example, received treatment at the same hospital or lived in the same area. The analysis will investigate the impact of each of these group levels – individual, hospital and area of residence – on the health outcomes for Aboriginal hospital patients.

This research will assist in targeting interventions to improve hospital care for specific patient groups, and in particular it will make an important contribution to Indigenous health awareness and improving the underlying disadvantage that Indigenous people face in the healthcare system.

Project Title: Exploring the contributions of individual-, area- and service- level factors to Indigenous health outcomes

Funding has been set at: \$469,000

Contact Details: l.jorm@uws.edu.au
<http://www.uws.edu.au/medicine>

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