

## Recognising and Responding to Hepatitis C in Indigenous Communities in Victoria

Indigenous Researcher: Robyne Latham

A collaborative research project between ARCSHS, La Trobe University and VACCHO.  
Funded by DHS.



Melbourne, Australia

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## Project Summary

- This study will
- identify barriers, to hepatitis C anti-viral treatment, for Indigenous communities throughout Victoria.
  - investigate appropriate treatment models for Indigenous communities in Victoria, which will take into account the role of GPs, Specialist, mainstream and culturally specific support services.



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## Aim

### To identify

- all hepatitis C services for Indigenous people Australia wide.
- **health care practices in managing hepatitis C in Indigenous people in Victoria.**
- barriers to hepatitis C anti-viral treatment, for Indigenous people in Victoria.
- To recommend culturally appropriate models of service delivery, for Indigenous people living with hepatitis C, in Victoria.



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## Chief Investigators

- Dr Stephen McNally. ARCSHS. La Trobe University.
- Dr Meredith Temple-Smith. University of Melbourne.
- Mr Mark Saunders. ARCSHS. La Trobe University.
- Dr Jacqui Richmond. ARCSHS. La Trobe University.
- Ms Jill Gallagher. VACCHO.
- Dr Priscilla Pyett. VACCHO & Onemna, University of Melbourne.



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## Methodology of the Study

A culturally sensitive research methodology has been critical to the progress of this study.

### Some contributing factors have been:

- An Indigenous researcher
- A community networking and development time line
- respect for cultural protocols and procedures
- transparency around the research process



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## Interviews conducted with:

- VACCHO members : 5 ACCHO's
- GP's: who are treating Indigenous people with hepatitis C
- Mainstream Organisations
- Indigenous people with hepatitis C



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## Community Development

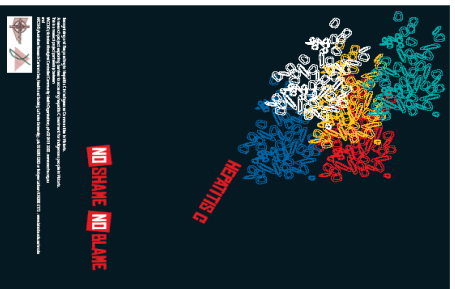
***Followed up on word of mouth referrals, and always acknowledged the source of the referral***

Contact made with:

- Indigenous people on Steering Committee
- State wide VACCHO meeting
- Indigenous health researchers
- ALO's in major hospitals

**Identified Opportunities to meet, greet and promote**

- Radio Program: 3KnD Deadly Health
- Chopped Liver: promotional material
- Veg Out
- Rainbow Place
- Parkies Breakfast
- Promotional material



## Research Questions

**To Professionals working with Indigenous people with hepatitis C**

- How long have you been working here?
- How would you describe the general health of your Indigenous clients with hepatitis C?
- What sort of challenges do you think Indigenous people with hep C have?

## Research Questions

**To People with hepatitis C:**

- When did you find out you had hep C?
- What do you know about hep C?
- Has your doctor ever discussed treatment with you?
- What do you do to monitor and check up on your hep C?

## Early Trends: Health Choices

- Extensive misinformation about hepatitis C, how it is contracted and the longer term consequences of this virus.
- Hepatitis C is cloaked in fear, shame and silence.
- There is a perceived need for a “consciousness raising/educational strategy” around hepatitis C.
- Hepatitis C is being diagnosed in pregnant woman and when people “go inside”, via the general battery of tests done at that time.

## Research will end by November 07

A written report will result from this research early in 2008 with feedback to the communities and all people involved in the study

