



Let's CHAT Dementia Study

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An Update from the Project Lead – Dina LoGiudice

Greetings everyone,

We hope you enjoy reading the updates for the Let's CHAT Dementia project. It is a momentous time for the team, as the data collection is now almost complete, and we are busily starting to analyse the findings. This is an important stage to tease out the overall impact of the Let's CHAT project on the care of people who are at risk of or who present with symptoms of cognitive impairment. Our initial findings look promising.

As you will read, we are now planning the dissemination of the findings, to ensure translation into everyday practice. This is described in more detail in the newsletter. If you have any suggestions please let us know. Our long-term aim is to delineate the best practices that can then be taken up by all ACCHSs.

We continue to collaborate with our partners and health services to find ways to optimise the well-being of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We look forward to updating you soon with the final outcomes.

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter.

An Update on the Progress of the Let's CHAT Dementia Project

Data collection for Let's CHAT wound up in WA in April 2022, in NSW at the end of 2022, in Victoria in early 2023, and a few months later in Queensland. Statistical analysis of the quantitative data is currently underway, and the qualitative data is currently being prepared for coding and thematic analysis.

Since the latter part of last year, our Dissemination Planning Group – made up of members of the Project Management Group, Indigenous Reference Group and other project members – has been working on a dissemination and translation strategy for the project. A three-level approach has been decided upon, with communication of local findings to the Let's CHAT co-researching ACCHS partners individually (in progress), then bringing together a range of stakeholders at the state level to present the overall study findings and recommendations, and finally reaching out to Commonwealth stakeholders.

Locally, the Let's CHAT team has prepared individual reports with preliminary findings from the project.

This includes an overview of what was looked at (demographic profile of the sample audited), and what was discovered in each audit period relating to rates of concerns being raised around cognition, charting of case-finding and follow-up activities (e.g. health personnel asking clients questions about their memory and thinking, any use of cognitive assessment tools, testing to exclude other causes), and finally, rates of identified cognitive impairment/dementia at each audit period. The reports also discuss the Let's CHAT education program and practice change initiatives undertaken in partnership with the ACCHS, and present feedback received from ACCHS staff about the Let's CHAT Dementia project.

The state and national dissemination work will commence as data analysis is completed, from September 2023 into 2024.

Conference Presentations

The Australian Dementia Research Forum

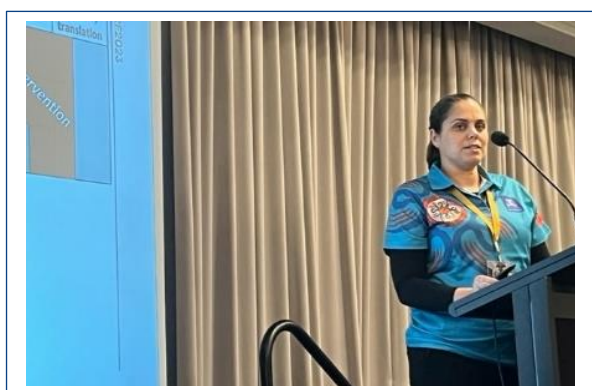
The Australian Dementia Research Forum is an annual event for Australian dementia research bringing together researchers, health professionals and policy makers. This year it was held on the lands of the Yugambah people on the Gold Coast, Queensland from 29-31 May 2023, and hosted by the Australian Dementia Network (ADNet).

The Let's CHAT project was successful in securing an oral presentation slot at the conference to discuss the preliminary findings of the Let's CHAT audit data.



Jo and Lauren presenting Let's CHAT preliminary findings

Biripi woman and NSW Research Officer, Lauren Poulos, and Project Manager, Dr Jo Hughson, co-presented the results. The session was very well attended and strong engagement was felt with lots of questions being asked by the audience.



Lauren at the podium



Jo, Lauren and Dina take a selfie before the conference

The Lowitja Conference

Australia's only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health research institute, Lowitja Institute, held its 3rd International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference held on 14-16th June 2023 on the lands of the Gimuy-Walubarra Yidinji and Yirrganydji peoples in Cairns, Queensland.

The Lowitja Conference brings together an impressive array of both international and local leaders, health professionals, researchers, community representatives and decision makers.

It is an opportunity for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to connect and share, and provides a space to share ideas and transformational research. This year's conference theme was: Truth, Rights, Response. Under the sub-theme, living a good life, members of the Let's CHAT team, Roslyn Malay, Harry Douglas and Jo Hughson gave a presentation on the development of the Lived Experience of Dementia workshop, that was delivered to ACCHS staff as part of the implementation of the Let's CHAT Dementia project.



Roslyn presenting on the development of our 'Lived Experience of Dementia' workshop



Let's CHAT team members (Jo and Harry) at the podium

We were also fortunate to have the opportunity to support the presentations of our research colleagues working on allied projects in this space, including those by: Joanne Luke from the University of Melbourne, Betty Sagigi, Adj. Prof. Eddy Strivens and Dr Rhiann Sue See from Queensland Health and James Cook University, and Prof Dawn Bessarab, Lianne Gilchrist, Caleb Rivers and Lyn Yappo from the University of Western Australia.



Let's CHAT team members and colleagues at the Lowitja Conference

Feedback Sessions with our ACCHS Partners

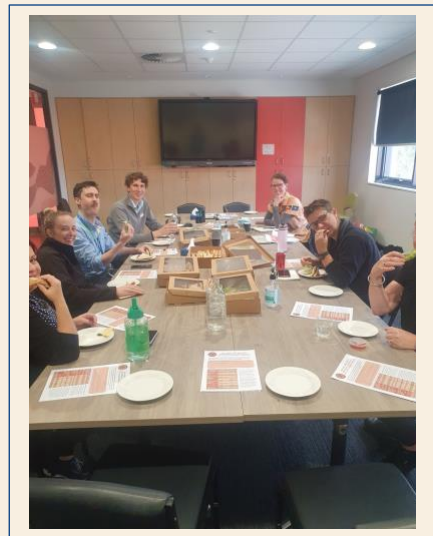
As part of the dissemination strategy outlined above, the Let's CHAT team has been visiting each Let's CHAT ACCHS partner to present their individual service report and discuss with services the aspects of the study they found beneficial or not, and how we can support services to sustain implementation after the completion of the project. It is also an opportunity to thank the staff at our ACCHSs for partnering with us on this research.

To date, these feedback sessions have taken place at the three Victorian ACCHS partner sites – Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative, Mallee District Aboriginal Services Mildura and Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative, and at Galambila Aboriginal Health Service in NSW.

In each case, we have received valuable feedback from ACCHS staff that are helping us to identify areas to lobby for and target for future funding initiatives. For instance:

- Several staff mentioned that dementia education needs to be ongoing (at least annually) to keep it fresh in people's minds, and because of high staff turnover.
- Community outreach and education also should be ongoing.
- Some staff expressed their appreciation of the workshops, especially the Lived Experience workshop which was described as "amazing" and "a real highlight", and the End-of-Life Care workshop which "put advance care planning on the agenda and made us all think".

Sessions are scheduled to continue over the coming months with our Qld partner sites, Mamu Health Service Limited in Innisfail, Gidgee Health Mount Isa, and Wuchopperen Health Service in Cairns, our WA partner sites, Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (Bidyadanga Clinic), Broome Regional Aboriginal Medical Service and Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service in Perth, and our other NSW ACCHS partner, Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation Aboriginal Medical Service.



Feedback session with BADAC



Feedback session with Wathaurong

Let's CHAT Dementia Partners

