

## September 2020

Welcome to the September 2020 edition of the Diabetes across the Lifecourse: Northern Australia Partnership – Far North Queensland newsletter.

### Funding announced to continue the FNQ Diabetes in Pregnancy Partnership

The Medical Research Future Fund has announced that the Diabetes Across the Lifecourse: Northern Australia Partnership was successful with our funding application (lodged in early February 2020) through the Preventive and Public Health Research Initiative. This funding round was specifically targeting the priority areas of maternal health and the first 2000 days, early childhood, and exercise and nutrition.

Our proposal is to enhance the existing Diabetes in Pregnancy Clinical Registers in the Northern Territory (NT) and Far North Queensland (FNQ). In addition, our work to support enhanced Models of Care will be able to be continued with this funding, with a focus on working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, families and communities to co-design initiatives that promote breastfeeding and healthy weight. As you would be aware, these initiatives have the potential to support immediate and long-term health outcomes for the mother and her child. This project will receive funding for the next five years.

In coming months, we will be working with the Chief and Associate Investigators as well as the Partnership's Indigenous Reference Group and Clinical Reference Group/Working Group to plan this exciting initiative. We look forward to working with you in this next phase of our Diabetes Across the Lifecourse Partnership.

### Partnership changes during COVID-19

During COVID-19, the Menzies Diabetes Across the Lifecourse Team have ceased trips to remote communities and paused activities with research participants (i.e. face to face education sessions, Youth Diabetes workshops). Our number one priority is always the health and safety of participants and researchers.

We are mindful of the COVID-related work load impacting our clinician, policy and health service partners. With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in the NT and FNQ, we will liaise with health services regarding appropriate times to recommence face to face Partnership activities.

We remain committed to our relationships with partners, communities and participants, and will continue to work together to support each other in these challenging times.

### FNQ Diabetes in Pregnancy Clinical Register

With the continuation of the FNQ Diabetes in Clinical Register, we continue to receive referrals and are exploring opportunities to increase coverage and improve efficiency.

It is greatly appreciated if you are able to assist with referring women from your service with diabetes in pregnancy to the Clinical Register. A copy of the referral form and information brochure for women are available through our website (<http://dipp.org.au/>) or contact [DiPPiNQ@menzies.edu.au](mailto:DiPPiNQ@menzies.edu.au).

### Changes to the Wednesday DIP Antenatal Clinic at Cairns Hospital

As of September 2020, the CHHS Obstetric and Diabetes teams will be commencing an additional low-risk GDM Clinic on a Wednesday morning at Cairns Hospital for suitable patients. This clinic will include the Diabetes Team and Midwives, and is in response to ongoing high demand at the Wednesday afternoon Diabetes Antenatal Clinic.

To improve patient experience, telehealth, phone consults and use of latest technologies such as flash glucose monitoring are also being utilised where possible.

### Diabetes in Pregnancy during COVID-19

COVID-19 has seen many temporary changes to the way that health care services are delivered, including diabetes in pregnancy and screening for GDM.

Cairns and surrounding areas can be considered as green status (low risk) at present, with the ability for pathology collection centres to manage an OGTT safely in most cases. As such, we will be encouraging usual practice as per the non-COVID screening guidelines for GDM. This means recommending universal screening with an OGTT at 24-28 weeks (and early test for GDM for high risk women using OGTT or HbA1c as appropriate), rather than just a fasting glucose in order to avoid missing a large number of cases of GDM in our region.

Don't forget to stay up to date with the Queensland Clinical Guidelines and FAQ for GDM Screening and Diagnosis during the COVID-19 <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/qcg>, last updated 30 June 2020.

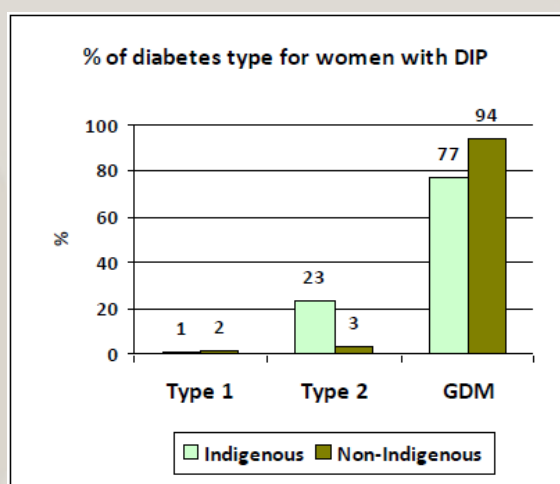
ADIPS provides a three-phase approach for GDM testing based on contagion risk and ability to social distance - <https://www.adips.org/>, last updated 7 May 2020.

## FNQ DIP Clinical Register Update

- As of August 2020, we have received 1488 referrals to the FNQ DIP Clinical Register.

For women on the FNQ DIP Clinical Register who birthed between October 2016 and December 2019 (n=1178):

- 88% (n=1061) had gestational diabetes, 10% (n=115) had pre-existing type 2 diabetes and 2% (n= 21) had type 1 diabetes
- Approximately 1/3 of women identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 1/3 of women identified as Caucasian with the remainder of women identifying from a range of ethnicities including Indian, Pacific Islander and Filipino
- 23% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women with diabetes in pregnancy experienced pre-existing type 2 diabetes compared with 3% of non-Indigenous women



- Women with pre-existing type 2 diabetes had higher rates of caesarean section (60%) compared with women who had gestational diabetes (38%). Women with pre-existing type 2 diabetes also gave birth to babies with higher average birth weight, large for gestational age and higher rate of congenital anomalies

Weight and Gestational Age	Type 2	GDM
Birth weight (gm)	3371	3304
Gestational age (wks)	37.3	38.3
% LGA (> 90 centile)	36%	13%
% SGA (< 10 centile)	4%	6%

## Upcoming Events

### Diabetes Update Day for Indigenous Health Workers – Wednesday 18 November 2020

The Cairns Diabetes Centre are offering an annual Diabetes Update Day for Indigenous Health Workers on Wednesday 18 November from 8.30am – 3.00pm at Cairns Hospital.

Topics covered include diabetes in pregnancy, diabetes medications, healthy lifestyle, blood glucose testing and hypoglycemia management.

Number are limited so please contact Kerry Vickers to register to attend or if you would like more information - [kerry.vickers@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:kerry.vickers@health.qld.gov.au)

### SAVE THE DATE! Diabetes across the Lifecourse: Northern Australia Partnership Symposium - Friday 23 October 2020

Our annual symposium date has been confirmed for Friday 23 October 9.00am – 1.30pm AEST.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, FNQ health services are encouraged to join in via videoconference.

Final details are still to be confirmed. This year's symposium theme will focus on the lived experience of diabetes:

#### **My Story. Our Journey. Diabetes is Everyone's Business.**

Please contact Norlisha Bartlett - [ntdippartnership@menzies.edu.au](mailto:ntdippartnership@menzies.edu.au) if you are interested in hosting as a video conferencing site for the symposium.

## Resources

FNQ - Healthy Mothers After a Pregnancy with Diabetes

<https://dipp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Key-5-Brochure-FNQ-Healthy-Mothers.pdf>

This brochure provides an overview of our project's Key 5 health promotion messages to staying healthy after a pregnancy with diabetes:



1. Post-partum blood glucose checks
2. Supporting breastfeeding
3. Maintaining a healthy weight
4. Staying smoke free
5. Contraception and future pregnancy planning

Please contact [DiPPiNQ@menzies.edu.au](mailto:DiPPiNQ@menzies.edu.au) if you would like to receive hard copies of the brochure.

## Recent Publications

Publications from the Diabetes across the Lifecourse: Northern Australia Partnership are available at [dipp.org.au](http://dipp.org.au)

MacKay D, Kirkham R, Freeman N, Murtha K, Van Dokkum P, Boyle J, et al. Improving systems of care during and after a pregnancy complicated by hyperglycaemia: A protocol for a complex health systems intervention. BMC Health Services Research, 2020. <https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12913-020-05680-x>

Maple-Brown LJ, Graham S, McKee J, Wicklow B, Walking the path together: incorporating Indigenous knowledge in diabetes research, The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology, 2020; 8(7), 559-560. doi:10.1016/S2213-8587(20)30188-1 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32559468/>

Maple-Brown LJ, Hampton D, Indigenous cultures with similar colonisation history share the challenge of intergenerational diabetes, Lancet Global Health (Invited Commentary). **Volume 8, Issue 5**, May 2020, Pages e619-e620. doi:10.1016/S2214-109X(20)20072-3 – <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214109X20300723>

Longmore D, Barr ELM, Barzi F, Lee I-L, Kirkwood M, Connors C, Boyle J, O'Dea K, Zimmet P, Oats J, Catalano P, McIntyre HD, Brown ADH, Shaw JE, Maple-Brown LJ, on behalf of the PANDORA study research team, Social and economic factors, maternal behaviours in pregnancy and neonatal adiposity in the PANDORA cohort, Diabetes Research & Clinical Practice [Epub ahead of print]. – <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/31962087>

Wood A, Mackay D, Fitzsimmons D, Derkenne R, Kirkham R, Boyle J, Connors C, Whitbread C, Welsh A, Brown A, Shaw J, Maple-Brown L, Primary health care for Aboriginal women in remote communities after a pregnancy with hyperglycemia, International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 2020 Jan 22;17(3). pii: E720. doi: 10.3390/ijerph17030720. – <http://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/17/3/720>

Lee I, Barr ELM, Longmore D, Barzi F, Brown A, Connors C, Boyle J, Hampton V, Lynch M, Lu ZX, O'Dea K, Oats J, McIntyre HD, Zimmet P, Shaw JE, Maple-Brown L, Cord blood metabolic markers are strong mediators of the effect of maternal adiposity on fetal growth in pregnancies across the glucose tolerance spectrum: the PANDORA study, Diabetologia, 2020 Jan 8. doi: 10.1007/s00125-01050792. – <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs00125-019-05079-2>

If you would like to get in touch about the Diabetes across the Lifecourse: Northern Australia Partnership in Far North Queensland, please email [DiPPiNQ@menzies.edu.au](mailto:DiPPiNQ@menzies.edu.au) or call (07) 4226 4639. If you would like to join our newsletter mailing list or do not wish to receive our newsletter anymore, please let us know via email. Our FNQ Project team are:

Kirby Murtha - FNQ DIP Partnership Coordinator, Menzies School of Health Research  
Chenoa Wapau - Research Project Officer (Diabetes in Pregnancy), Apunipima Cape York Health Council  
Dr Anna McLean – Endocrinologist, Cairns Hospital

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations in FNQ for their continued support and involvement with the FNQ Diabetes in Pregnancy Partnership. For further information visit <http://dipp.org.au>



## Youth Diabetes Project Update

This project aims to co-design, pilot and evaluate culturally appropriate diabetes management programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth with type 2 diabetes across Northern Australia (NT, Kimberley and FNQ).

The first component of this project aims to assess the prevalence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people under the age of 25 with type 2 diabetes. We are currently at the data extraction and analysis phase.

The second component aims to better understand the lived experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people with type 2 diabetes. Interviews commenced in February with clients from one of the two participating sites in Far North Queensland, involving young people, a support person and a health professional.

Given the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been unable to complete this phase of data collection in the region. We had also planned to employ local project staff and establish a working group by mid-2020 to inform this study. Although we look forward to reinvigorating the program in the near future, we will be guided by the local sites and health advice on when and how to progress.

**Don't forget to visit our website for up to date Partnership information – [dipp.org.au](http://dipp.org.au)**



*In the spirit of respect, Menzies School of Health Research acknowledges the people and the Elders of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations who are the Traditional Owners of the land and seas of Australia.*

