



FESTIVAL OF
**CONTAGIOUS
IDEAS** 2016



NEW SOUTH WALES
HEALTH INNOVATION
Symposium 2016

Enhancing Patient Experience Through the Arts

Gomeroid Gaaynggal arts health for pregnant Indigenous women Hunter New England Local Health District

The Gomeroid Gaaynggal Centre highlights innovative creative approaches to provision of health care for Indigenous women during their pregnancy and post-partum period. The Gomeroid Gaaynggal program underwent a two year Indigenous community consultation to ensure the program met Indigenous community expectations. Additionally the project has ensured Indigenous community governance with the project overseen by the Gomeroid Gaaynggal Aboriginal Steering committee. This committee reviews all clinical processes, project outcomes, new studies and publications.

The Gomeroid Gaaynggal team for patient-centred care involves Hunter New England radiology department, the Tamworth Base Hospital maternity unit, AMIHS and the obstetrics and gyn-aecology specialists. Each member of the group has a distinct role. For example, Gomeroid Gaaynggal deliver the clinical ultrasounds in the ArtsHealth facility and Hunter New England Radiology department assist with reporting of images and exporting so that reports can be viewed by specialists as needed.

Art is created onsite at the Gomeroid Gaaynggal Centre and visually represented throughout the clinical spaces of the Centre. This approach has been strengthened by an exceptional team of Indigenous women who ensure that the cultural needs of the community are kept to the forefront of all Gomeroid Gaaynggal core business.

ArtsHealth displays developed by the Indigenous women, of pregnancy body casts and beautiful paintings are showcased at the Tamworth maternity unit, clinics and radiology department. These artworks generate an interest in pregnancy health care and promote the work of the Gomeroid Gaaynggal program to encourage antenatal uptake in Indigenous communities.

This project is scalable and has been replicated into the remote community of Walgett. In this region, access to services is limited and maternal and infant health outcomes are worse than for other larger communities. The ArtsHealth program in this area is partnered with the Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service and has been underway since 2009. The Gomeroid Gaaynggal program has been invited to other Aboriginal communities to deliver ArtsHealth and community consultation is currently underway to ensure we can meet community expectations.

Through the intertwining of ArtsHealth additional research led by the Gomeroid Gaaynggal team has led to the largest Indigenous pregnancy cohort internationally. We have determined the median BMI of the cohort was 30.3 kg/m² at enrolment (median 23 weeks gestation). 43 per cent reported smoking cigarettes during pregnancy. 43 per cent of cohort had an uncomplicated pregnancy, 13.9 per cent delivered preterm, 14.6 per cent delivered a small-for-gestational age infant, 10 per cent developed a hypertensive disorder of pregnancy, and 6.3 per cent developed gestational



diabetes. In addition, many women showed evidence of underlying renal dysfunction. Our studies follow infants to 5 years, and preliminary results show that 77 per cent of babies had breastfeeding initiated, with mean duration of 4.2 months (less than recommended six months). Of infants less than 12 months, six per cent had received sweetened drinks in the preceding 24 hours. This preliminary data suggests support to optimise dietary intake for infants, particularly to initiate/continue breastfeeding.

The ArtsHealth is an ideal opportunity for women who are attending for art practice activities to discuss infant nutrition and other health issues with health professionals, including midwives and dietitians. Overall this research ensures that we can target our ArtsHealth activities and health promotion around projects that reduce obesity, aim for smoking reduction, ensure regular antenatal care, and promote healthy nutrition to reduce diabetes and improve kidney function. These have created ideal opportunities for ongoing collaboration with the clinical services of the Hunter New England Health District.