

The Indigenous Eye Health Unit Trachoma Elimination Update: Oct 2012



Technical Advice and Support

The IEHU has continued to provide technical expertise in health promotion, social marketing and program evaluation to trachoma elimination programs in the Katherine West Health Board region and the wider NT.

Katherine West Health Board

Fiona Lange went out bush for two weeks in Feb 2012 with KWHB program coordinator Emma Baunach, travelling to Bulla and Timber Creek to support trachoma screening and health promotion activities in community clinics and schools.

During this trip Fiona and Emma worked on the process and impact evaluation of the Trachoma Story Kits, interviewing program participants and with the support of many staff in clinics, schools and community work places, conducted 76 post-test surveys.



Elder Jack Little taught about trachoma in English and Ngarinman language at Bulla School in Feb 2012

In May, Gurindji kids and adults from Kalkarindji and Daguragu made a music video called "Clean Face, Strong Eyes" promoting clean faces and strong eyes to avoid trachoma which was promoted on the website of the International Coalition for Trachoma Control.

Emma Baunach left to have a baby and Bec Cooney who had previously been trachoma coordinator, returned from maternity leave to take up the post again.

Centre for Disease Control

Long time NT Trachoma Coordinator Cate Coffey resigned and Carolyn Lloyd took over. To improve co-ordination and progress of the many developing health promotion initiatives, stakeholders from Congress Remote, CDC, Fred Hollows Foundation, IEHU and Anyiningi Congress met in Alice Springs.



Trachoma stakeholders planning health promotion in Alice Springs March 2012

Professor Taylor and IEHU staff accompanied program supporters to a NT trachoma elimination program being run by Centre for Disease Control staff at the school and clinic in Mutitjulu community.



On the road to Uluru and Mutitjulu April 2012



Josie preparing for screening in Mutitjulu April 2012

Trachoma Social Marketing

Milpa the trachoma goanna has become the symbol for clean faces and strong eyes as he reinforces the messages in the Trachoma Story Kit resources to encourage behaviour change in personal hygiene.



Milpa on the way to Tennant Creek via the IEHU May 2012

'Milpa' which means 'eye' in the Walpiri language has become a prominent program brand with professional character costumes in Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Darwin. Milpa has a dance routine, an OH&S checklist, a minder and a very busy schedule, his PA has booked over 30 community visits to date across the NT to communities from 30 up to 3,000 people.

Milpa is now in a new children's A3 laminated poster along with Melbourne Football Club Trachoma Ambassador Aaron Davey.

Trachoma health promotion messages on radio and on prime time TV continued until prior to the recent NT elections; with four different adverts being shown over the last 12 months. The reach estimated by the eMitch group was that when screened the adverts were seen by a viewing audience (aged 13+ years) of between 71,000 and 78,500 per month.

Melbourne Football Club Support

The third MFC Trachoma Elimination Footy Clinic in the NT took place in Alice Springs in July this year. With solid local support from the AFL NT around 200 children and adults attended day the Yipirinya School, an Independent Aboriginal School in Alice Springs.

Milpa's special friend, Yamba the Honeyant made a guest appearance, to sing and dance on stage teaching the preschool children kids all about clean faces and good hygiene to get rid of trachoma.



Kids at Yipirinya School with Checker and Milpa July 2012

The Demon's mascot and Milpa brought trachoma health promotion to the big game at TIO Stadium in Darwin with an audience of 7,000 and the Clean Faces, Strong Eyes slogan and TV advert was shown on the big screen.



Talking about trachoma has become an annual presence at the AFL fixture in Darwin.

Melbourne Football Club will continue to support trachoma elimination as one of their three priority community programs in 2013.

MFC has produced a new television advert featuring Aaron Davey and Milpa which will be shown on Imparja television free of charge as a community service announcement but not in prime time slots.

Jimmy Little Foundation Workshops

Josie Atkinson travelled out to Hermannsburg for a week in May, to work with the Jimmy Little Foundation, Congress Remote, the local school, clinic and shops. The team made a creative environment for kids with music and multimedia to promote clean faces, holistic hygiene and healthy eating education. Their song features on the new Trachoma Story Kit DVD.

Sadly this was the last workshop conducted out bush before Uncle Jimmy Little passed away. He was a legendary singer, humanitarian and tireless supporter to improve the future for Aboriginal children.



The kids wrote messages for trachoma elimination and good hygiene into their song Hermannsburg May 2012

New Trachoma Resources

With funding from OATSIH and support from program supporter Mr Peter Anastasiou the IEHU reviewed and refreshed the Trachoma Story Kits.



The new 'one stop shop' Trachoma Story Kit 2012

We are absolutely delighted with the new and improved version of the Trachoma Story Kit for all work place settings. All resources are available on our website: <http://www.iehu.unimelb.edu.au/>

The 200 new Kits and large stock of additional popular items are now available at only the cost of freight to programs across Australia.

The NT trachoma programs are more active and 'on the ground' in communities since the Trachoma Story Kits were launched just over two years ago.

The DVD in the new 2012 Trachoma Story Kit reflects this greater awareness and wider involvement in trachoma elimination with the addition of a dozen creative initiatives about hand and face washing and holistic hygiene by program partners, health and hygiene programs and children and adults in remote communities.

Women's Radio Series

Josie Atkinson engaged the production facilities and expertise of 3KND, Melbourne's Indigenous radio station to produce a five part radio series about trachoma elimination for women.

It features the voices of trachoma program staff and supporters and many high profile Indigenous women including Evonne Goolagong, Deb Mailman, Cathy Freeman, Professor Marcia Langton and 2012 Deadly Award winner Bo de la Cruz.

The program will be broadcast around the country on the Women's Business Show on CAAMA Radio 11am-12noon each Friday for six months with an audience of young mothers, aunties, grannies and women with influence in family and community life.



Josie Atkinson, Erica Higgins and Fiona Lange at CAAMA

Each visit to Alice Springs means a hello at CAAMA with Erica Higgins and an update interview about progress with trachoma elimination.

The CAAMA Radio features are part of an on-going program to develop awareness about eye health in Indigenous communities.

Adaptations of Trachoma Resources

The resources continue to form the basis for local input and ideas by trachoma program staff and local communities and resources. Trachoma nurse Brendan Johnson at CDC in Darwin worked with the Vic Daly Shire Indigenous Broadcasting Program to create a video translation of the Trachoma Community Flipchart in Murrinhpatha language for Wadeye and nearby communities.

The Yamba and Milpa television advert was used as an introduction to the video which can be adapted for 5 Vic Daly communities. The IEHU will be providing a Community Flipchart template to enable translation in other languages by other Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services (RIBS) for local community controlled media.



A language video of the Community Flipchart was made in Wadeye community Sept 2012 (Image: Vic Daly Shire NT)

Impact Evaluation

Fiona Lange worked with Katherine West Health Board and CDC staff to conduct a pre/post survey on knowledge, attitudes and practices in relation to trachoma with respondents from major centres and 64 of the 86 communities at risk of trachoma in the NT. Here are some brief findings:

The respondents were staff members in clinics, schools or community work places; (pre 272, post 261) they were the primary audience of the trachoma elimination program and integral to the roll out of the program in each community. The respondents were not necessarily the same people in the pre/post testing, although there were doing the same job or held the same position.

The statistically significant changes in knowledge and attitudes were seen predominantly in the clinical settings: Clinical knowledge of trachoma increased from 35% to 63% and clinical knowledge of trichiasis increased from 51% to 74%.

All workplace settings reported statistically significant improvement in response to the questions 'is it true that it is simple to treat trachoma?' and 'I am able to teach others about trachoma prevention'.

Being comfortable in talking about hygiene with others was at a high level both in the pre and post studies, in both clinic and community settings. There was an improvement in schools, with 13% more staff being able to comfortably talk about hygiene (79% to 92%).

In response to the question "Is it normal for kids to have dirty faces"? The 'yes' response of clinic staff decreased by 16% (from 42% to 26%) and in community workplaces this decreased by 10% (41% to 31%). But in schools there was a 6% increase in staff considering it normal for kids to have dirty faces (32% to 38%).

These data will be utilised by the trachoma elimination programs in refocusing their settings-based health promotion and social marketing for 2013.

Time constraints and availability of resources were the two major barriers to using the Trachoma Story Kits.

Publications

Two aspects of evaluation of the Trachoma Story Kit resources have been published this year:

The development of culturally safe and relevant health promotion resources for effective trachoma elimination in remote aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal
Volume 36 Issue 2 Jun 2012

Emma Baunach, David Lines, Brian Pedwel, Fiona Lange, Rebecca Cooney and Hugh R. Taylor.

Trachoma elimination in remote Indigenous Northern Territory communities: baseline health-promotion study.

Australian Journal of Primary Health
Published online 8 October 2012

Fiona D. Lange, Emma Baunach, Rosemary McKenzie and Hugh R. Taylor.

