

## Example Project Proposal

### Risk factors for gonorrhoea in young heterosexuals in Perth

#### Study component 1: Qualitative in-depth interviews

**Background Information:** Rates of gonorrhoea in Western Australia have tripled since 2013. If not diagnosed and treated early, gonorrhoea in women can have serious health consequences. For example, infertility, pregnancy, and birth complications. This research aims to understand how and why these rates are increasing. This will help the WA Department of Health to decide on the next steps to take to reduce gonorrhoea infections in Western Australia. Curtin University expect to recruit 20 people to take part in interviews. This is a collaborative study with key partners including the Western Australian Department of Health, the Kirby institute (UNSW), University of Western Australia (UWA) and SiREN (Curtin University).

**Study aims and objectives:** The aim of the proposed research is to investigate the risk factors for gonorrhoea in heterosexual people aged 18-34 years living in metropolitan Perth.

The objectives of the research are:

1. To interview young people with gonorrhoea to understand the potential drivers and context related to gonorrhoea infection
2. To quantify if these risk factors are more likely in cases than controls
3. To evaluate the association between the risk factors and gonorrhoea cases who are part of a cluster identified by genotyping.
4. To provide new information on modifiable risk factors and priority populations for potential public health action.

Collectively, this information will inform the public health response to controlling gonorrhoea in young heterosexuals in Perth.

**Study design:** Ethics approval for this evaluation will be sought from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee before data are collected. Qualitative data will be collected from 20 heterosexually identifying, non-Aboriginal people between the ages of 18-34 years who have tested positive for gonorrhoea, and living in the Perth metropolitan region. Pregnant women and sex workers are not eligible to participate in this study.

**Recruitment:** Participants will be recruited from sexual health and General Practitioners (GP) clinics in Perth. On testing positive for gonorrhoea, patients meeting the eligibility criteria will be invited to participate in the research by their GP. If they are interested in participating, they will be asked to provide a name and phone number which the clinician will share with the research team. The research team will then contact the patient with information about the research. If the participant is interested in taking part, they will be sent an email with the participant information statement and a consent form.

**Data collection:** If the patient consents to take part in the research, a telephone interview will be scheduled with a member of the research team. These semi-structured interviews will last between 30-45 minutes. Areas of enquiry will centre on participant partner/s and sexual networks, risk factors, sexual behaviours, and participant experiences of testing and treatment. These interviews will be electronically recorded and then transcribed.

**Data analysis:** Data from the interviews will be coded and thematically analysed using appropriate qualitative analysis programs to identify key themes.

**Reporting and dissemination:** Findings will be published in a report to the project's funder: the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Program (SHBBVP) at the WA Department of Health. The final report will be published on the SiREN website and disseminated through the various SiREN network newsletters. Articles will also be submitted to peer-reviewed journals and relevant conferences. The research findings will be made available to those participants who wish to be informed.