





STIs and BBVs and associated issues in our communities

ABC News March 3 2018



isentia

SEXUAL DISEASES REVEAL DEPTH OF CRISIS

Child sex abuse 'like a tsunami'

BRIDGING THE GAP

Child protection authorities are overwhelmed by the scale of the problem and under-resourced central agencies are struggling to cope, the Australian Government says. The problem is so severe that it is being described as a tsunami. The government says it is not alone in facing this crisis, with many other countries also struggling to cope with the scale of the problem.

Sixth infant dies from congenital syphilis amid outbreak in northern Queensland

By political reporter Dan Conifer
Updated 3 Mar 2018, 11:54am

A sixth infant has died from congenital syphilis amid a devastating outbreak of the disease in parts of remote Australia.

The young children have all died in Queensland, where the spate of cases emerged in 2011.

Department of Health official Sharon Appleby said the latest death was the sixth of 12 infants with reported cases of congenital syphilis who died.

The latest death occurred in northern Queensland in January.

The sexually transmitted infection can be passed from a mother to her baby during pregnancy.

Congenital syphilis can cause miscarriages and stillbirths, or problems with a baby's brain, blood, eyes, and ears.

The local outbreak is severely impacting Indigenous communities and has now spread to Western Australia, South Australia, and the Northern Territory.

The Commonwealth is coordinating a national response and has committed \$5.6 million over three years for testing, treatment, and additional health workers.

'It's not satisfactory'

But Labor senator Patrick Dodson said syphilis cases were rising and the response was inadequate.

"Something's not working here," Senator Dodson said.

"If this was happening in Victoria you wouldn't be standing around having a meeting, someone would be doing something and fixing the problem up."

"\$5 million, people are having a meeting ... it's not satisfactory."

But Department of Health official Caroline Edwards defended its work to date.

"We are also very alarmed and distressed by the changes in this particular epidemic," Ms Edwards said.

"We do take it very seriously and see it as a very important thing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Australia."

The department said it was looking to work with several Aboriginal community-controlled health organisations to pilot its response.

The Australian Medical Association has called for a national centre for disease control (CDC) to help control the outbreak.

But Ms Appleby said a new, standalone authority was unnecessary.

"Because of the federal nature of governance in this country ... providing national coordination in the way we do things is the best way," she said.

Topics: health-administration, health, child-health-and-behaviour, infant-health, sexual-health, sic

First posted 3 Mar 2018, 9:00pm

March 3, 2018. ABC - NIT Syphilis (6th baby death)
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-02/sixth-infant-dies-of-syphilis/9503964>

Remove at-risk kids, leaders say



BRIDGING THE GAP

EXCLUSIVE

JOHN ELFERINK

Former federal Aboriginal affairs minister

Some of the nation's most prominent Aboriginal leaders said a federal task force should be set up to remove at-risk children from their homes and place them in foster care or residential care.

The leaders, including former federal Aboriginal affairs minister John Herron, said the government should take action to protect children from sexual abuse and other forms of harm.

"We need to take a hard look at the way we are dealing with these children," Herron said.

"We need to make sure that these children are safe and that they are being protected from harm."

The leaders also called for a national centre for disease control (CDC) to help control the outbreak.

A CULTURAL RIGHT? NO, CHILDREN HAVING SEX IS ILLEGAL

We are suspending the human rights of NT kids and creating a repugnant mess

JOHN ELFERINK

In the 1980s I watched an ambulance officer protectively cradle a newborn infant in Alice Springs and soothe softly at the little girl: "You're so beautiful. It's a pity

budgets have been expanded. From 2000 to 2016 the budget for child protection grew from \$9 million to \$110m.

Former federal Aboriginal affairs minister John Herron once sent in the army.

The Productivity Commission has recently reported that \$30bn is spent on Aboriginal outcomes annually for a national Aboriginal

suggests that the best people to look after a child are family.

However, it has decayed into an approach in which children are left in circumstances where their human rights are regularly breached in favour of a notion that cultural rights somehow have supremacy.

This represents a return to that maxim: "the the standards of the

10th-13th March

NITV IN FOCUS #WalkWithUs Grace Beside Me Indigenous Science
HOME ON DEMAND FEATURES PROGRAMS NITV RADIO TOPICS TV GUIDE GET INVOLVED

15 MAR 2018 - 3:14PM

Why are white people on Sunrise with no experience calling for Indigenous child removals?



ABORIGINAL ADOPTION
Proposal for white families should take in abused kids

NRL: PAUL GALLEN DENIES SHARKS TARGETED SOOK MATT SCOTT'S KNEE BRI 27 6.48

IMAGE VIDEO AUDIO

OPINION: "Debates facilitated by the wrong people does little more than stir up emotions and reinforce negative stereotypes rather than focus on solutions," writes Summer May Finlay

By Summer May Finlay

13 MAR 2018 - 4:08 PM UPDATED YESTERDAY 3:14 PM

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Warning on sexually transmitted diseases ignored

Indigenous Affairs **Senator Nigel Scullion** ignored a plea from a government SLP more than a year ago to implement a \$25 million policy to combat sexually transmitted diseases among Aboriginal communities, named adopting a film program that remains stalled.

The Australian has obtained a letter passed by Liberal senator Dean Smith warning that the rise of STIs in indigenous communities was "disturbing" and urged Senator Scullion to take immediate action, describing the situation as "critical".

"If no more you would agree that the increase in rates are disturbing and if a critical that we really this challenge head on to ensure the problems do not escalate to a crisis point," Senator Smith told Senator Scullion in December 2014.

When contacted yesterday about the letter, Senator Scullion denied claims for the government's inaction in Indigenous Health Minister Ken Wyatt.

Senator Scullion's spokesman told The Australian he passed Senator Smith's letter on to the "health portfolio".

The letter, addressed to Senator Scullion and copied to Mr Wyatt and former health minister Susan Ley, outlined a detailed proposal drafted by experts James Ward and Frank Denison, in consultation with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, to tackle a syphilis epidemic in indigenous communities.

Professor Ward yesterday confirmed he had meetings with Senator Scullion, Mr Wyatt and Health Minister Greg Hunt about his policy proposal. The West Australian policy was stalled following meetings with Mr Ley.

The children have died from gonorrhea epidemics since the epidemic emerged in north Queensland in 2011 and later spread to the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia.

The government set on the \$25m policy until last November when it agreed to adopt one third of it as part of an \$8.8m plan to tackle the epidemic outbreak in central and northern Australia.

The two other elements of the proposed three-year program — to reduce HIV risks and broader STI risks in Aboriginal communities — were rejected.

Since announcing the revised three-year policy, the government has failed to release the program details (West Australian) holding meetings about its implementation since August, before its funding was agreed off by July 2016.

Mr Wyatt said yesterday the matter would begin in October and October 15 day. He said the epidemic outbreak was an "absolute priority" and had been targeted on a national basis since 2012 but more funding was needed because the rates had not decreased.

Feature stories

Reverting to more dangerous age
A new study shows that people aged 65 and over are now dying at a faster rate than in the 1980s.

Scarcer facing its backlog in business
A new study shows that the number of businesses in Australia is falling at a faster rate than in the 1980s.

West impact of Labor's tax bill
A new study shows that the impact of Labor's tax bill on the economy is likely to be negative.

Featured careers

Senior Clinical Practice Specialist
Department of Health
Location: Adelaide, SA
Salary: \$100,000 - \$120,000

Chief Executive Officer
Department of Health
Location: Adelaide, SA
Salary: \$150,000 - \$180,000

Senior Clinical Practice Specialist
Department of Health
Location: Adelaide, SA
Salary: \$100,000 - \$120,000

Chief Executive Officer
Department of Health
Location: Adelaide, SA
Salary: \$150,000 - \$180,000

Hunt flagged STI issue year ago

EXCLUSIVE
GREG BROWN



Hunt

Health Minister Greg Hunt wrote to Labor MPs a year ago detailing the skyrocketing rates of sexually transmitted infections in Aboriginal communities, declaring the government was "assessing" a \$25 million policy to tackle the issue, but later rejected it in favour of smaller plan which is yet to be rolled out.

In a letter obtained by The Australian, written in March last year, Mr Hunt told opposition health spokeswoman Catherine King and Labor MP Warren Snowdon that he shared Labor's concerns about increased rates of STIs in Aboriginal communities.

wrote a cover letter on the policy when it was given to Senator Scullion, warning action on the issue was "critical".

Writing in The Australian today, Senator Smith said: "More must be done and faster. Good intentions will not be enough to avoid a catastrophe. The response needs to be rapid and strategic".

The two pilot sites of the new syphilis program will start in May, 18 months after the government received the policy.

Indigenous Health Minister Ken Wyatt denied the syphilis response was stalled.

"It is well advanced including the purchase of medication, on-ground co-ordination and the targeting of areas at greatest risk of syphilis," Mr Wyatt said.

Mr Hunt's letter was sent to

THE CONVERSATION

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An STI epidemic in young people does not signal sexual abuse

March 10, 2016 6:00am AEST



EXCLUSIVE

'Blindness' behind syphilis epidemic



STEPHEN FITZPATRICK

A syphilis epidemic that has gripped remote Aboriginal communities has been stoked by 'wilful blindness'.

EXCLUSIVE

Project to fight syphilis epidemic



STEPHEN FITZPATRICK

A \$8.8m program to combat syphilis in remote indigenous communities is on the verge of being rolled out.

Authors

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Tuesday 20th March



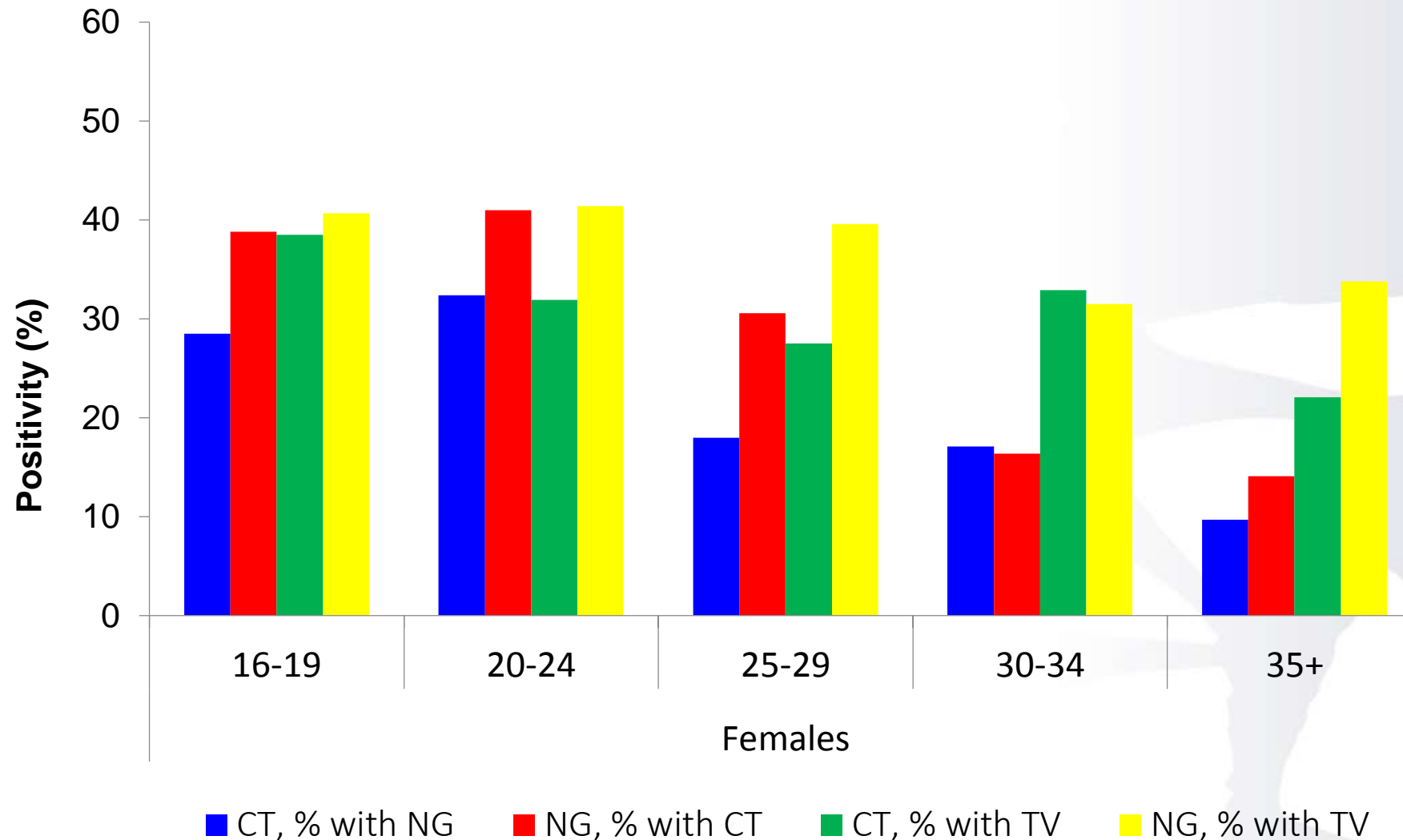
Aboriginal cases 2017

| 2017 | CT | NG | Syphilis < 2y | All |
|-----------------|-------|-------|---------------|------|
| <12 | 1 | 4 | | 11 |
| 12 | 2 | 2 | | 6 |
| 13-15 | 146 | 138 | 23 | 307 |
| % 13-15 in < 16 | 98.0 | 95.8 | 100.0 | 96.9 |
| 16 and over | 1,368 | 1,446 | 246 | 3060 |
| % > 16 | 90.2 | 90.9 | 91.4 | 92.0 |
| | | | | |
| All Indigenous | 1,517 | 1,590 | 269 | 3376 |

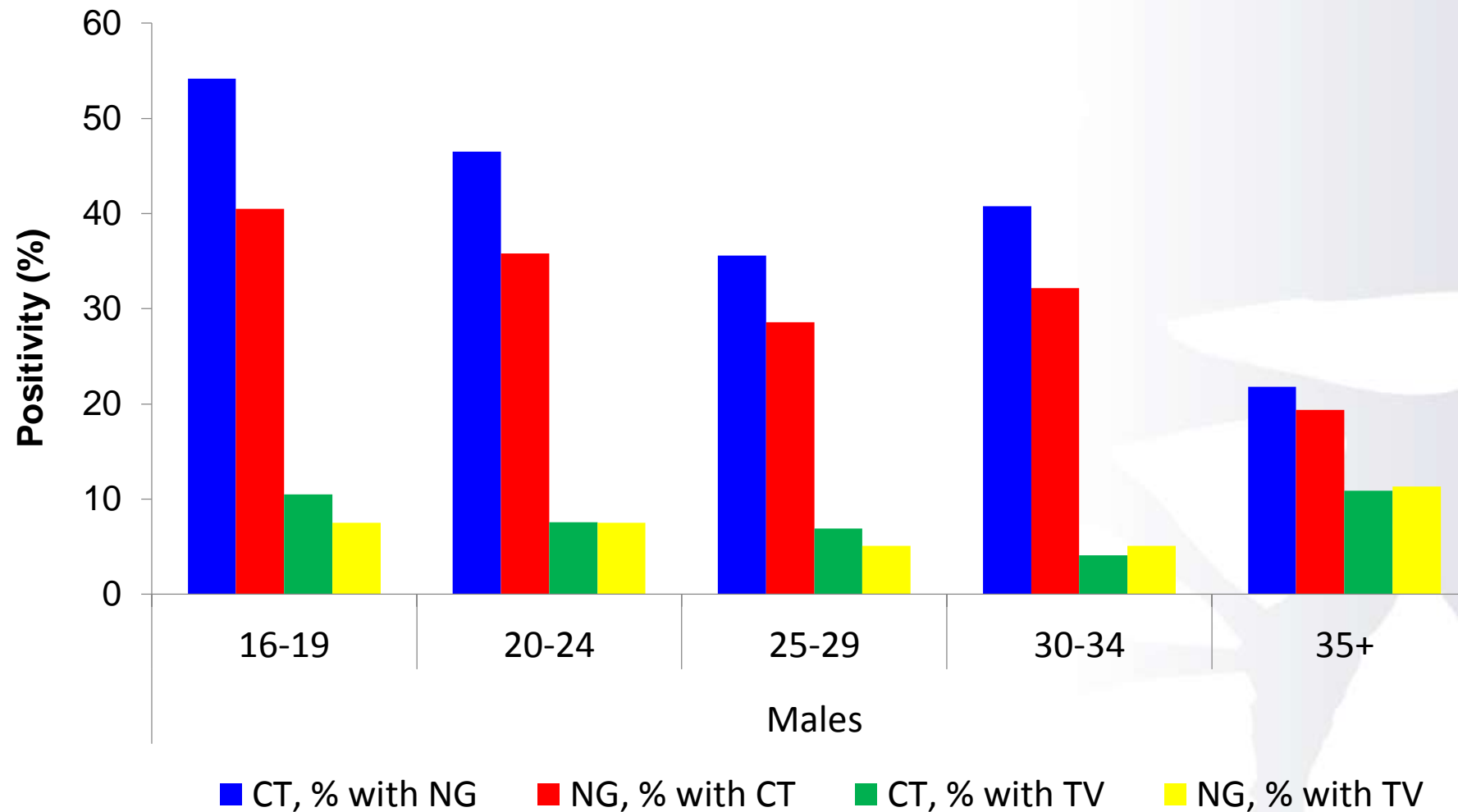
Summary

- Many caveats around data - but one thing is for certain most media are not interested in caveats
- Know your data
- Let people know majority of STIs >16
- Think about who else in Australia has to justify a failure of public health system - syphilis case with child removal
- Health Departments ready to feed people who can speak to media

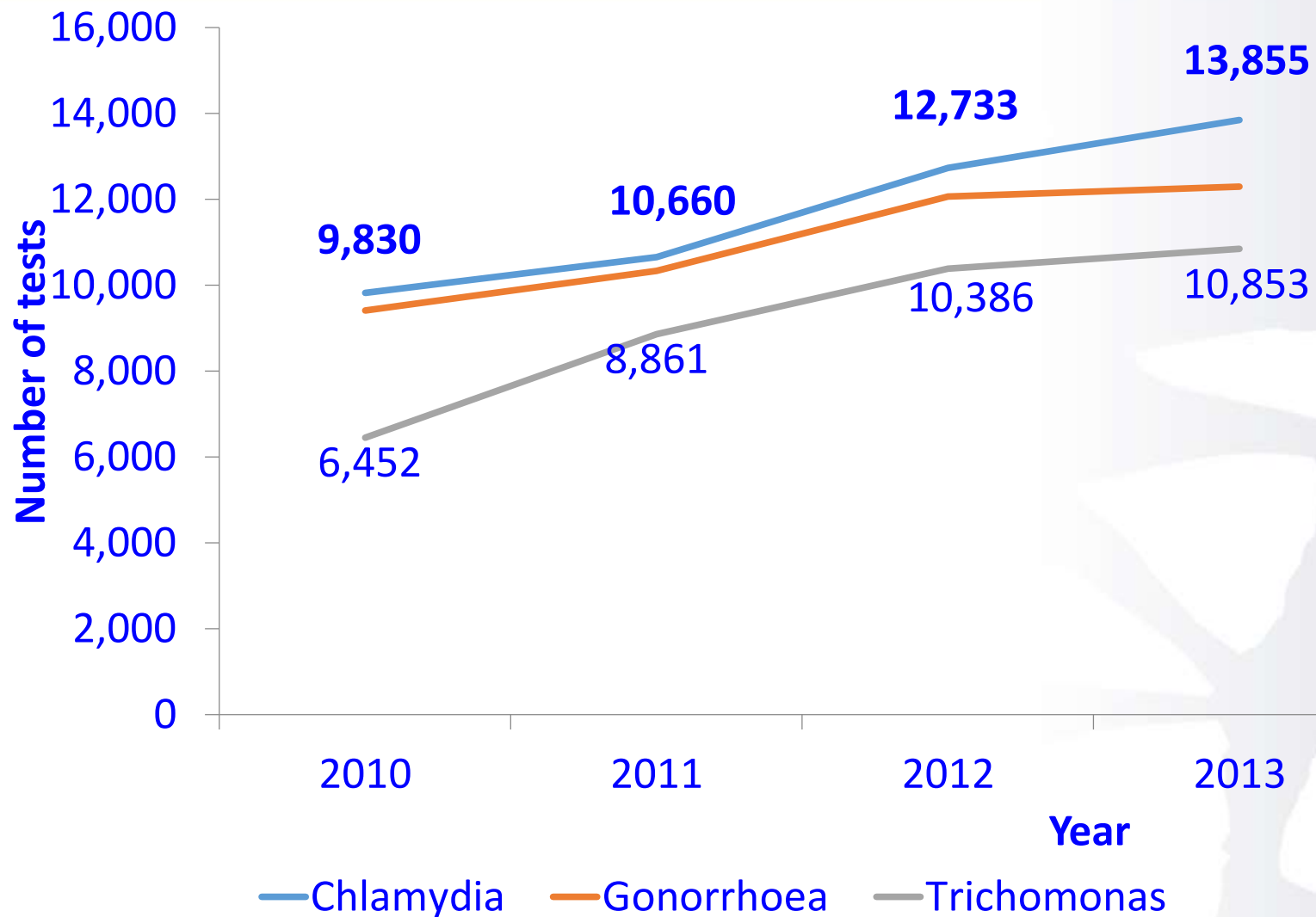
STRIVE STI co-infections in remote Aboriginal communities: females



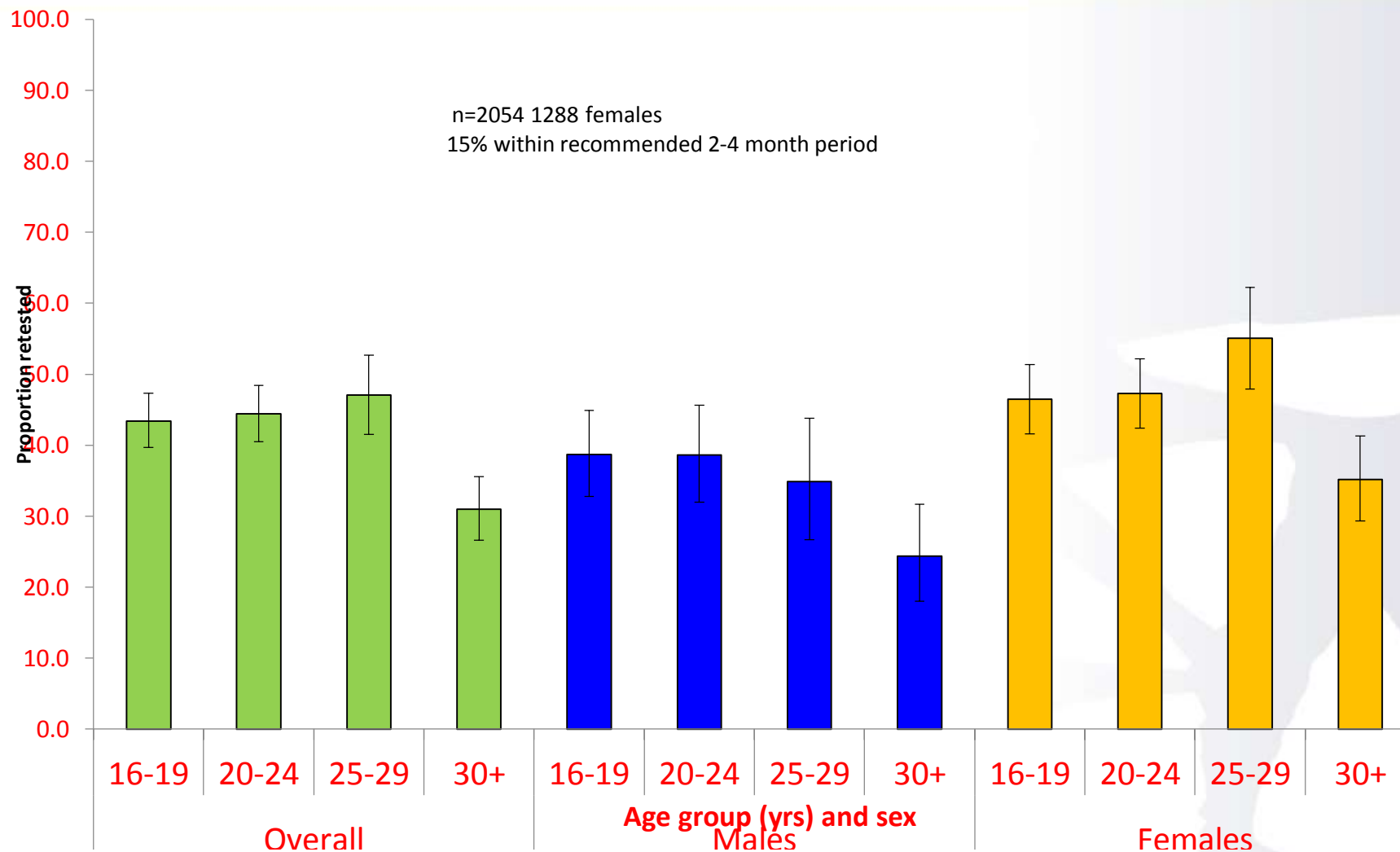
STRIVE: STI co-infections in remote Aboriginal communities: males



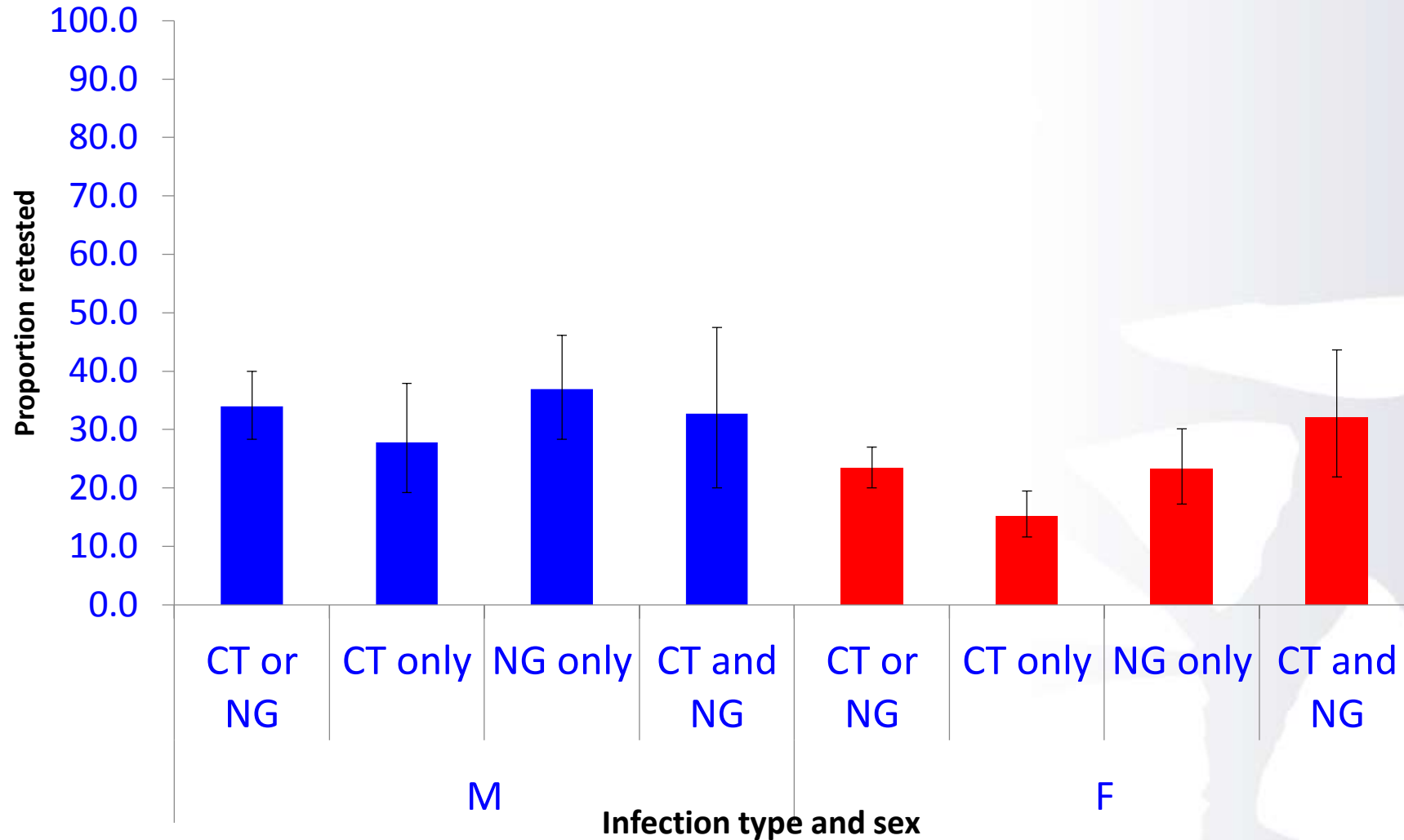
Total STI testing by calendar year



Retesting at 2-12 months after a positive Dx



Repeat positivity at 2-12 months, by infection type and sex

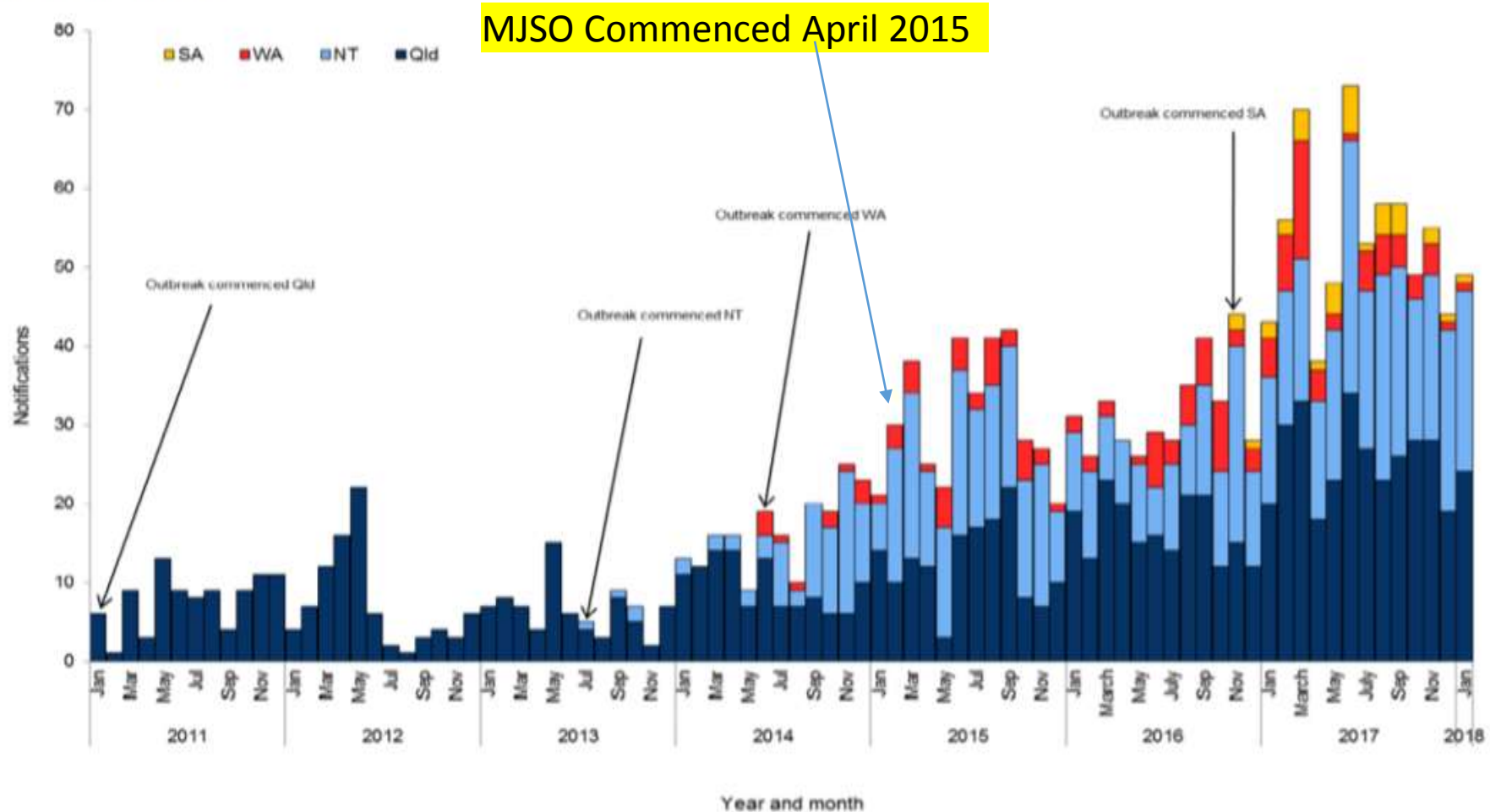


STI and HIV/syphilis testing

| | Any + STI test | HIV and syphilis testing within 30 days of any positive STI test (incl. same day) | | HIV and syphilis testing within 30 days of any positive STI test (excl. same day) | |
|----------------|----------------|---|------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| | N | HIV test <30 days n (%) | Syphilis test <30 days n (%) | HIV test <30 days n (%) | Syphilis test <30 days n (%) |
| Overall | 15260 | 4,858 (32%) | 6727 (44%) | 854 (6%) | 1099 (7%) |
| Sex | | | | | |
| Male | 4190 | 2035 (49%) | 2355 (56%) | 208 (5%) | 209 (5%) |
| Female | 11055 | 2815 (25%) | 4361 (39%) | 646 (6%) | 889 (8%) |

Syphilis outbreak northern Australia by jurisdiction

Figure 1. Epidemic curve showing outbreak cases of infectious syphilis^a notified in affected regions^b of Queensland, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia from commencement of the outbreak in each jurisdiction to 31 January 2018^v.



Syphilis outbreak northern Australia by jurisdiction

Table 1. Characteristics of outbreak cases of infectious syphilis notified in affected regions of Queensland, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia, to 31 January 2018ⁱ.

| | North Qld (four HHSs ^b) | NT (four regions ^b) | WA (Kimberley region) | SA (three regions ^b) |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Situation to-date, 31 January 2018 | | | | |
| Outbreak commencement month/year | January 2011 | July 2013 | June 2014 | November 2016 |
| Total number of cases ^a | 1066 | 704 | 148 | 34 |
| Percent cases reported in 15-29 year age group | 67% | 66% | 70% | 47% |
| % Male / % Female | 48% / 52% | 47% / 53% | 37% / 63% | 44% / 56% |
| Congenital cases, confirmed (probable) | 4 (4) | 2 (2) | 0 (0) | 1 (0) |
| -number of deaths in congenital cases | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Last reporting months, 1 December 2017 – 31 January 2018 | | | | |
| Number of cases ^a | 43 | 46 | 2 | 2 |
| Percent cases reported in 15-29 year age group | 58% | 46% | 100% | 50% |
| % Male / % Female | 37% / 63% | 41% / 59% | 50% / 50% | 0% / 100% |

Enhanced response to syphilis

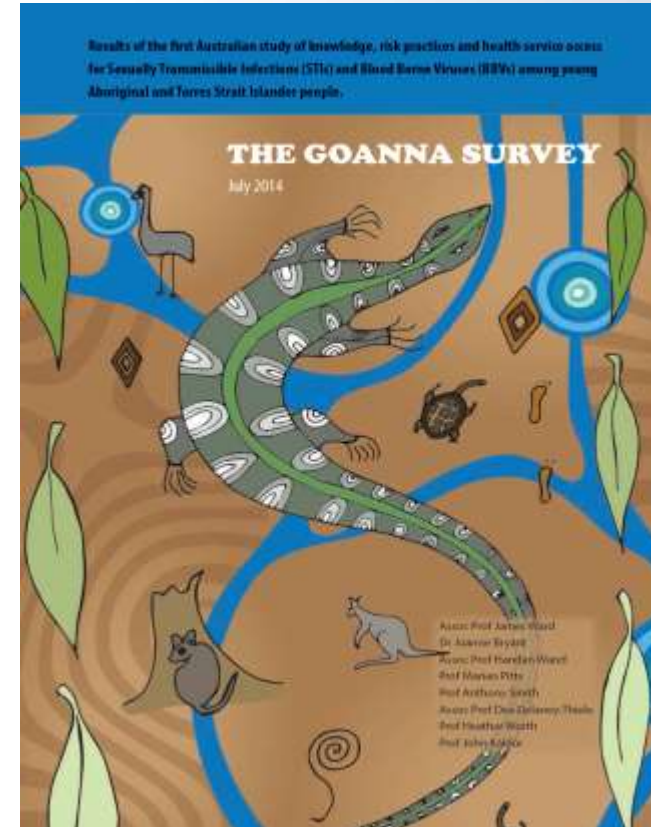
- Advocacy dating back to 2012- 2013
- Ministerial level (MACBBVS Min of Health)
- BBVSS level (special Meeting August 2015 Adelaide)
- High Level Summit 2015 STIs and BBVs
- Proposal requested from then Min for Health Sussan Ley December 2016, submitted Dec 2016
- Outlining response to STIs and BBVs
- Government allocated 8.8M for 217/2018 FY

Enhanced response

- Proposal went first to AHPPC Nov
- Then AHMAC (December 2017)
- Initial sites Darwin TSV Cairns, then Katherine West and East Arnhem
- Plan is roll out a Test and Treat model
- Main components- workforce- Rapid tests- community engagement
- Trial sites Commence in May

the GOANNA study

- National cross sectional survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 16-29 years
- Assessed knowledge, risk factors and health service access for STIs and BBVs
- Collaboration involving every jurisdiction health Departments and ACCHS orgs



Television commercials

Feel free to use these in community settings, educators health promoters

<https://youngdeadlyfree.org.au/resources/tv-ads/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGxnPbSo0uA>

Syphilis educational animation

Feel free to use these in community settings, educators health promoters

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a54pOp_3UOA

All available and downloadable from a website



Syphilis Resources

9 items

Yesterday



HEPB Resources

3 items

19 hours ago



HEPC Resources

3 items

19 hours ago



HIV Resources

6 items

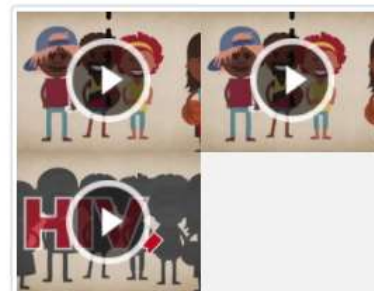
19 hours ago



Factsheets

4 items

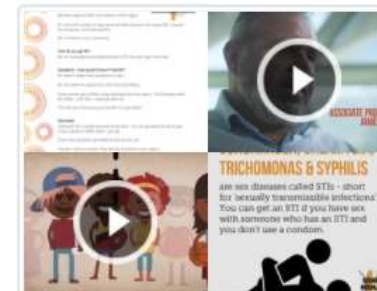
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Educational Animation...

3 items

Apr 26



STI's

4 items

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Infographics

6 items

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