**2021 Summer Research Project Description**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project title:** | **The ATLAS Surveillance Network – contributing to the descriptive epidemiology of** **sexually transmissible infections and blood borne viruses testing and management in Indigenous Primary Care** |
| **Positions available:** | **2—3** |
| **Project duration and delivery** | The two summer projects offered will be compatible with a 0.6FTE role (3 days per week), for approximately 8 weeks.  Ideally, the students should be co-located with UQ Poche staff in Brisbane, but remote working arrangements will be considered. |
| **Description:** | The ATLAS network is a sentinel surveillance system established to monitor sexually transmissible infections (STI) and blood borne virus (BBV) testing, diagnosis and management data, principally with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Services (ACCHS). This surveillance system is a driver of sexual health continuous quality improvement and other research activities in Indigenous primary health care nation-wide.  Regular reports delivered to participating ACCHSs address 12 performance measures considered to be best practice in STI and BBV screening and clinical management. The ATLAS project is also developing an interactive online dashboard for participating ACCHS, for access to customisable analyses and output. Limited benchmarking and analyses of regional and temporal trends have already been undertaken and regular contribution to some annual national reporting frameworks has also been established. The relative youth and richness of the ATLAS surveillance infrastructure provides substantial opportunity for research and analyses not yet fully explored by the data team and investigators, and the quality assurance and refinement of coding and processes already developed.  Under supervision of the ATLAS data team (Data Manager, Analyst and/or Engineer) and overseen by the ATLAS Program Manager, scholars wishing to develop their analytic and programming skillset may undertake a project that works directly with the surveillance data, to write or refine R Markdown scripts that contribute to the ATLAS knowledge base. For example, scholars may be supported to develop an .rmd script that reads project data, cleans and checks the data import, and undertakes simple descriptive analysis or generates relevant visualisations. If time/capacity permits, scholars could also develop a simple statistical model to interpret the data.  Scholars more interested in STI and BBV epidemiology and/or Indigenous health services research may opt to focus on reviewing the literature and academic write-up of analyses produced by other members of the team.  To facilitate a productive summer project, scholars will be expected to meet once or twice with the ATLAS data team in advance of commencing the opportunity, in order to discuss and define the exact work to be undertaken. |
| **Expected outcomes and deliverables:** | Scholars will be gain experience working in a dynamic health surveillance program and alongside the world-class research team that is UQ Poche. They will gain an understanding of the mechanics of working with primary health care data and the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisation sector.  Scholars may undertake basic descriptive and comparative analyses (temporal or regional) designed to both characterise clinical data collected by the ATLAS surveillance network and provide insight for the further technical development of the data infrastructure. Learning goals for a project of this nature could include:   * The ability to install and configure RStudio, manage versions and projects * An ability to write reasonably clean and readable R scripts * An understanding of version control and collaborative work * An ability to use R markdown for reproducible reports * A basic ability to manipulate and clean data using tidyverse * Capacity to develop simple visualisations and models for interpreting data   Scholars may instead opt to focus on developing their critical appraisal and academic writing skills, contributing to manuscripts based on analyses undertaken by other members of the ATLAS team. Through this they will gain skills in strategic literature searches, critical appraisal and systematic review of the literature, and producing academic manuscripts suitable for publication as part of a professional research team.  Scholars will have their contribution/authorship appropriately credited in any published material generated from their work. Scholars may also have the opportunity to be involved in the regular Poche research seminars and present their work as part of this program. |
| **Suitable for:** | These opportunities are ideal for students in the biomedical sciences, completing an Honours or Masters degree, with a strong interest in in public health, epidemiology or infectious disease surveillance. Exceptions could be made for an undergraduate scholar, subject to review of their skillset and capacity. Awareness of the need for culturally appropriate approaches in Indigenous health research is a must.  Scholars wishing to undertake an analytically-focus project will need a proven grounding in quantitative data analysis and, ideally, some familiarity coding in R. |
| **Primary Supervisor:** | Dr Clare Bradley, UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health |
| **Further info:** | For further information, or to discuss an application, please contact [clare.bradley@uq.edu.au](mailto:clare.bradley@uq.edu.au) (phone 0419 858 162). |