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Dallas has considerable experience in the health field and currently the Manager of the Public Health Field Research Program at James Cook University. She is on the Board of Directors at WuChopperen Health Service, an Aboriginal Community Control Health Service in Cairns. Her interests include governance, health promotion and tobacco control.

Partnerships in Tobacco Control – Working with Eight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Far North Queensland

There is little published data on the effectiveness of smoking modification programs within the Australian Indigenous population. What is obvious from research within the non-Indigenous population is the need for multi-strategy interventions that target not just the individual but also the community within which they live. Individuals will be more likely to succeed in modifying their smoking behaviour if their social and physical environments support their attempts. Any intervention therefore needs to address not just individual attitudes and resources but also the knowledge, attitudes and resources available at a community level.

A collaborative research project between James Cook University, Queensland Health and eight Indigenous communities aims to examine the impact of a multi-intervention anti-tobacco strategy in far north Queensland over a three year period. The project has three broad aims:

- To increase the capacity of health services to implement and deliver anti-tobacco interventions,
- To increase community knowledge about the health risks of smoking, and
- To decrease the level of tobacco consumption within communities.

Queensland Health in partnership with key organisations has developed a suite of strategies to address tobacco smoking at a number of levels. Throughout the project three household surveys will be conducted. A total of 702 people over the eight communities were interviewed during the baseline household survey and 593 (84.5%) of these identified as Indigenous. This response rate represented a range of 53 to 88% of targeted households in each community.

This paper will discuss the development of strategies to address tobacco smoking, the household survey process and community involvement in the research process.