

Young Researcher

Kate Smith



Kate's doctoral study was entitled 'Assessment and Prevalence of Dementia in Indigenous Australians'. Kate and Dr Dina LoGiudice developed the Kimberley Indigenous Cognitive Assessment (KICA), in partnership with Kimberley Aboriginal communities, and organisations including Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council and Kimberley Aged and Community Services. The KICA is a valid assessment of cognitive impairment in rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged over 45 years.

Using KICA, the investigation determined the prevalence of dementia is substantially higher in this population (12% dementia over 45 years) than in non-Indigenous Australians, and other populations worldwide. It also included re-evaluation of the KICA on a larger Kimberley (WA) sample, and in the Northern Territory. A short version of the KICA (KICA Screen) was also developed, and has since been validated in Far North Queensland including the Torres Strait.

Dr Kate Smith PhD (UWA), BSc (OT), BSc (HMovt, Psych) is an Assistant Professor at the University of Western Australia 's Centre Health and Ageing.

The KICA is freely available on www.wacha.org.au

Kate's current study entitled 'Health Outcomes of Older Indigenous Australians: A 5-year follow up study of a population at risk', involves investigating depression, falls, incontinence, carer burden and dementia in older Aboriginal Australians, and protective and risk factors for morbidity, functional decline and death.

Kate has some notable achievements in her relatively short research career, including being part of a team receiving \$2,544,800 in grants from the National Health and Medical Research Council. The team includes Dr Dina LoGiudice, Winthrop Professor Leon Flicker, Assistant Professor Kathryn Smith, Winthrop Professor Osvaldo Almeida, Professor Nicola Lautenschlager, Associate Professor David Atkinson. The projects funded included "Models of Care to address unmet needs for Older Indigenous People with Dementia, their Families and Communities in Remote Northern Australia".

Kate received the prize, for the 'Best Published Paper' from the Medical Research Foundation, Royal Perth Hospital in 2008, for the following paper:

Smith K, Flicker L, Lautenschlager NT, Almeida OP, Atkinson D, Dwyer A, LoGiudice D. 'High prevalence of dementia and cognitive impairment in Indigenous Australians.' *Neurology*, 71, 1470-1473, 2008.

Kate was also awarded the 'Highly Commended' prize, 'Champion for Seniors', WA Seniors Week 2009. She is an author of 12 peer-reviewed publications, 7 as first author, three reports and one book chapter on this topic.

Kate's advice to new researchers is to be aware of the importance of working collaboratively and developing partnerships with other disciplines and organisations.