

## **Symposium Description (250 words max.)**

**Symposium Lead (name and affiliation):** Anna Adcock (Ngāti Mutunga, Aotearoa), Centre for Women's Health Research, Victoria University of Wellington

### **Rationale for Symposium:**

The evidence is very strong that the first five years of life starting from pregnancy are crucial for a broad range of health outcomes and for the long-term achievements of children as adolescents and adults. However, in both Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia, Indigenous women and their infants are experiencing more harm than New Zealand European and non-Indigenous Australian women and infants. Disparities in health outcomes include higher rates of maternal and neonatal death, and higher rates of preterm birth. When a preterm baby survives, they are more likely to experience morbidity that may last a lifetime. Such disparities are rooted in systematic disadvantage including reduced access to health care, culturally inappropriate models of health care, and historical trauma and disenfranchisement. In order to achieve equity, health services in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia need to address current barriers to culturally safe and appropriate care.

### **Topic description**

Culturally safe maternal and neonatal care for Indigenous families is key to eliminating current disparities in health outcomes. In this symposium, Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers working in Indigenous-centred maternal and infant health research in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand will present ideas on culturally safe care. The common thread binding the presentations is the acknowledgement of the sovereignty of Indigenous women and families, and the importance of paying attention to their concerns, needs and aspirations about health and wellness.

### ***Presentation one***

Authors and affiliations. Dr Yvette Roe (Njikenā Jawuru, West Kimberley region, Western Australia), Molly Wardaguga Research Centre, Charles Darwin University, Brisbane.

Overview: The Indigenous Birthing in an Urban Setting (IBUS) study aims to improve the birthing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women in an urban setting. This new model of care is informed by the Birthing on Country literature and Guiding Principles, and is conducted in partnership with two local Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations. Redesigning the health service, investing in workforce, strengthening family capacity and community empowerment are key components of this service. These will be discussed.

### ***Presentation two***

Authors and affiliations. Dr Sophie Hickey and Prof Sue Kildea, Molly Wardaguga Research Centre, Charles Darwin University, Brisbane.

Overview: This presentation shares exciting results of the Indigenous Birthing in an Urban Setting (IBUS) study. Its impact and evaluation will be discussed, as well as next steps for strengthening the cultural safety of maternity care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women in Australia. The importance of knowledge translation to inform replication and scaling-up of these services will also be discussed.

### ***Presentation three***

Authors and affiliations. Francesca Storey and Prof Beverley Lawton (Ngāti Porou, Aotearoa), Centre for Women's Health Research, Victoria University of Wellington

Overview: He Korowai Manaaki (HKM) is a strengths-based Iwi (tribe)/research centre partnership that started with an invitation by the Iwi, to work together to address disparities in health outcomes for Māori women and families. Walking with the regional community, starting with an asset mapping exercise, facilitated the establishment of a steering group to drive the development and undertaking of an augmented maternity care pathway, supported through primary care. HKM prioritises the views of Māori women and their families around health and social needs. Key learnings from the partnership, and the benefits of culturally safe, wrap-around care will be discussed.

#### *Presentation four*

Authors and affiliations. Anna Adcock (Ngāti Mutunga, Aotearoa), Centre for Women's Health Research, Victoria University of Wellington

Overview: He Tamariki Kokoti Tau is a Kaupapa Māori (by, with, and for Māori) qualitative longitudinal study that examines the experiences of families of preterm Māori infants as they journey along the preterm care pathway. The study aims to give voice to their experiences, views and attributions, with the goal of service transformation to ensure that families are supported as they face the joys and challenges of parenting their precious taonga (newborn gift). This research has found variation in access to culturally safe care for Māori families experiencing preterm birth. Recommendations for health system improvement will be discussed.