

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Public Health Unit Research Report 2023

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

April 2024



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1 Foreword

The Public Health Unit is responsible for monitoring, preventing and otherwise minimising public health risks in the community. These risks might be infectious diseases acquired from other people, from animate vectors, such as mosquitoes, or from sources in the built environment, legionellosis being a good example. Other risks might be caused by exposure to toxic chemicals, whether present in tobacco smoke, or a result of contamination of the air, soil or water by industrial processes.

To undertake this work, the Public Health Unit comprises a multidisciplinary professional team of registered nurses and surveillance officers, medical personnel, environmental health officers and epidemiologists, supported by able administrative staff. Staff work closely within the District with population health staff and clinicians in all hospitals and in the community, with Health Protection NSW and with other agencies to respond to and minimise public health risks.

In 2023 we developed and implemented a PHU Research Strategy, which included aims to support staff to enhance their research knowledge, skills and confidence; build individual and team capacity to undertake research; and increase the number of staff involved in research. We can see the Strategy is already bearing fruit with three PHU staff becoming published authors for the first time in 2023. Congratulations to Reannon Johnson, Thea Brigger Tiqui and Courtney McGregor on their successful first research endeavours!

This Research Report showcases research published or accepted for publication or presentation over the last year, and also summarises some new projects – in infectious diseases, environmental health risks and regulation including tobacco control, and the impact of COVID-19, and we hope this work will have an impact on future public health.

2 Scientific Publications

Capon A, Chaverot S, Katelaris A, Ferson M, Klees N, Selvey C, et al. The value of universal screening for COVID-19 cases on cruise ships during outbreaks. *Public Health Res Pract.* 2023 Dec 6;33(4). DOI: 10.17061/phrp3342338

Ferson MJ, Johnson R, Cains T. Cremation and the medical practitioner. *Med J Aust.* 2023 Oct 16;218(4): 190-1. DOI: 10.5694/mja2.51824

Louie G, Torres RJ, **Katelaris A, McGregor C, Lai V, Stevens R, et al.** Meningococcal B septic shock, reactive pericarditis and public health. *Med J Aust.* 2023 Jul 20;219(4):150–2. DOI: 10.5694/mja2.52049

Ravindran B, Gatens E, Pal N, **Sheppard V, Calik A, Alexander K, et al.** First documented gymnasium cluster of COVID-19 with whole genome sequencing in Australia. *Commun Dis Intell.* 2023 Sep 21;47. DOI: 10.33321/cdi.2023.47.55

Swift C, Katelaris A, Briggen Tiqui T, Smith J, Papa T, Janz-Robinson E, et al. Toxigenic cutaneous diphtheria without recent travel, Sydney, Australia, 2022. *Med J Aust.* 2023 Dec 18;220(3):126–8. DOI: 10.5694/mja2.52190

Trevitt BT, Katelaris A, Bateman-Steel C, Chaverot S, Flanigan S, Cains T, et al. Community Outbreak of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* Infections Associated with Contaminated Piercing Aftercare Solution, Australia, 2021. *J Emerg Infect Dis.* 2023 Oct 1;29(10): 2008-15. DOI: 10.3201/eid2910.230560

2.1 Publications In Print or Progress

Stiboy E, Rigava S, Katelaris A, Sheppard V, Glynn-Robinson A, Al-Hindawi Y, Goldberg H, Shaw K, Sintchenko V, Martinez E, Crighton T, Donnan E, Byrne A. Genomic Sequencing Identifies Tuberculosis Outbreak in Inner City Sydney Boarding House, Sydney, Australia 2022. (submitted)

3 Presentations at Conferences

Capon A, Klees N, Chaverot S, McIndoe L, Katelaris A, Ferson MJ, Sheppard V. Revamped NSW Cruise Ship Health Surveillance Program. Communicable Diseases & Immunisation Conference, Perth 2023.

Chisholm P, Katelaris A, Wilson P, Nurkic A, Chaverot S, Chee K, Sheppard V. Sydney WorldPride 2023: Blueprint for managing communicable diseases and public health threats. Communicable Diseases & Immunisation Conference, Perth 2023.

Ellwood L, Chaverot S, Stiboy E, Armstrong LE, Briggen Tiqui T, Maude L, Papa T, Katelaris A, Sheppard V. Auditing aged care COVID-19 outbreaks to improve outcomes. Communicable Diseases & Immunisation Conference, Perth 2023.

Hannan T. An audit of tobacco retailers in Aboriginal communities. SESLHD Population and Community Health Showcase, 2023.

Huang B. Exotic Vector Detection Adjacent to Major Sydney Cemetery: A Highly Suitable Habitat. Mosquito Control Association of Australia Conference, Brisbane 2023 and NSW Arbovirus Surveillance Workshop, Manly 2023.

McIndoe L, Davies C, Vujovich-Dunn C, Young A, Papa T, Kean S, Dives M, Sheppard V. Exploring factors associated with low vaccination uptake among schools in Eastern Sydney. Communicable Diseases & Immunisation Conference, Perth 2023.

McIndoe L, Wilson E, Sheppard V. Determinants of uptake of the school-based vaccination program in eastern Sydney. Communicable Diseases & Immunisation Conference, Perth 2023.

McIndoe L, Young L, Davies, C, Vujovich-Dunn C, Papa T, Kean S, Dives M, Tillman L, Sheppard V. Understanding Parent Dynamics in School Vaccination: A case study in Eastern Sydney. HPV Partnership Project Investigator Meeting, 2023.

Stiboy E, Rigava S, Katelaris A, Sheppard V, Al-Hindawi Y, Goldberg H, Shaw K, Sintchenko V, Elena Martinez E, Crighton T, Donnan E, Byrne A. Tuberculosis outbreak in a boarding house identified through genomic sequencing, Sydney, 2022. Communicable Diseases & Immunisation Conference, Perth 2023.

Swift C, Katelaris A, Briggen Tiqui T, Smith J, Papa T, Janz-Robinson E, Nguyen T, Wang Q, Draper J, Sintchenko V, Marriot D, Sheppard V. Public health response to a toxigenic cutaneous diphtheria case without recent travel. Communicable Diseases & Immunisation Conference, Perth 2023.

4 Research, Evaluation and Quality Improvement Projects Completed or in Progress

McIndoe L, Young A, Vujovich-Dunn C, Sheppeard V, Kean S, Dives M, Guy R, Davies C. Factors impacting on parent vaccination decisions post COVID-19: A case study of the school vaccination program in South Eastern Sydney, Australia; manuscript preparation.

McIndoe L, Young A, Davies C, Vujovich-Dunn C, Papa T, Kean S, Dives M, Tillman L, Guy R, Sheppeard V. Determinants of inequity in uptake of the adolescent school-based vaccination program in SESLHD; manuscript preparation.

Chisolm P, Sheppeard V, Chee K. Sydney WorldPride 2023: an evaluation of public health preparedness and response; completed.

Coutelas J, Smith S, Parashko T, Wong, H, McIndoe L, Allen A, Sheppeard V. Needs and assets assessment for mothers living with hepatitis B virus (HBV) in South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD); completed.

Chaverot S, Tan CL, McGregor C. Evaluation of HealthLink for syphilis notification; completed

Ferson MJ, Flanigan S, Westman M, Pastrana-Valez A, Knobel B, Cains T, Marinello M. Rare urban-acquired case of human leptospirosis and environmental health investigation in Sydney, Australia; in progress.

Stiboy E, Sheppeard V, Parry A, Katelaris A. Evaluation and review of the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) tuberculosis (TB) contact data; in progress.

Stiboy E, Sheppeard V, Parry A, Katelaris A. Evaluation and review of the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) weekly public health acute respiratory infection (ARI) summary; in progress.

Chaverot S, Katelaris A. Analysis of mpox vaccination series completion by route of vaccine administration and other factors, SESLHD, August 1 2022 - May 31, 2023; in progress.

Marris K, Latham, N, Swift C, Chaverot S, Ellis S, Armstrong B, Katelaris A, Selvey C. Multijurisdictional nosocomial outbreak of *Ralstonia pickettii* infections from contaminated saline, Australia 2023; in progress.

Chaverot S, Hickey R, Matthews G, Dore G, Sheppeard V. Using hepatitis B notifications to improve linkage to care; in progress.

Tillman L, McIndoe L, Kean S, Dives M, Sheppeard V. Year One: Online Consent in NSW School Vaccination- Triumphs, Trials, Path Ahead; in progress.

Parashko T, Brown S, Sheppard V, Chaverot S, McIndoe L, Crawford A, Allen A, Papa T. Boost the Booster: improving the uptake of COVID-19 booster vaccinations in older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD); in progress.

Richards L, Chee K, McIndoe L, Allen A. Trial cold chain audit survey; in progress.

Crawford A, Sheppard V, Chaverot S. Evaluation of the STI report; in progress.

Sheppard V, Snyders K, Klingstrom M. Legionella urinary antigen study; in progress.

5 2023 CORE Awards

Members of the Public Health Unit were the recipients of 2023 CORE awards. Dr Vicky Sheppard received an award for Providing Outstanding Service, the School Program Team for Excellence in Environmental Sustainability and the Infectious Diseases Team along with our Sexual Health colleagues for Keeping People Health with their 'Response to the Global Mpxv Outbreak.'



From left to right: Lisa Maude, Michelle Dives, Tracey Papa and Alice Egerton-Smith at the 2023 CORE Awards receiving the awards for the Public Health Unit and the Sexual Health Services.



Dr Vicky Sheppard and her CORE Award for Providing Outstanding Service

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