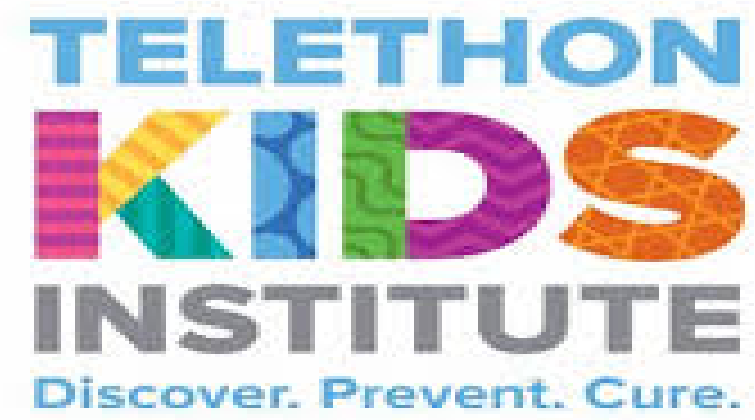


Developing an Effective Community Care Program For Skin Infections in Aboriginal Communities



Ellen Anshelevich, Class of 2019, Department of Anthropology
Telethon Kids Institute, Perth, WA, Australia
Funded by CHW under the Health Grand Challenges program

Introduction

- In the Western Desert, skin infections are the most common reason that children younger than age 10 miss school
- Clinics in these areas are equipped with the medicine to treat these infections (scabies, skin sores, etc), but there is an element of trust missing.

Objective of the Project

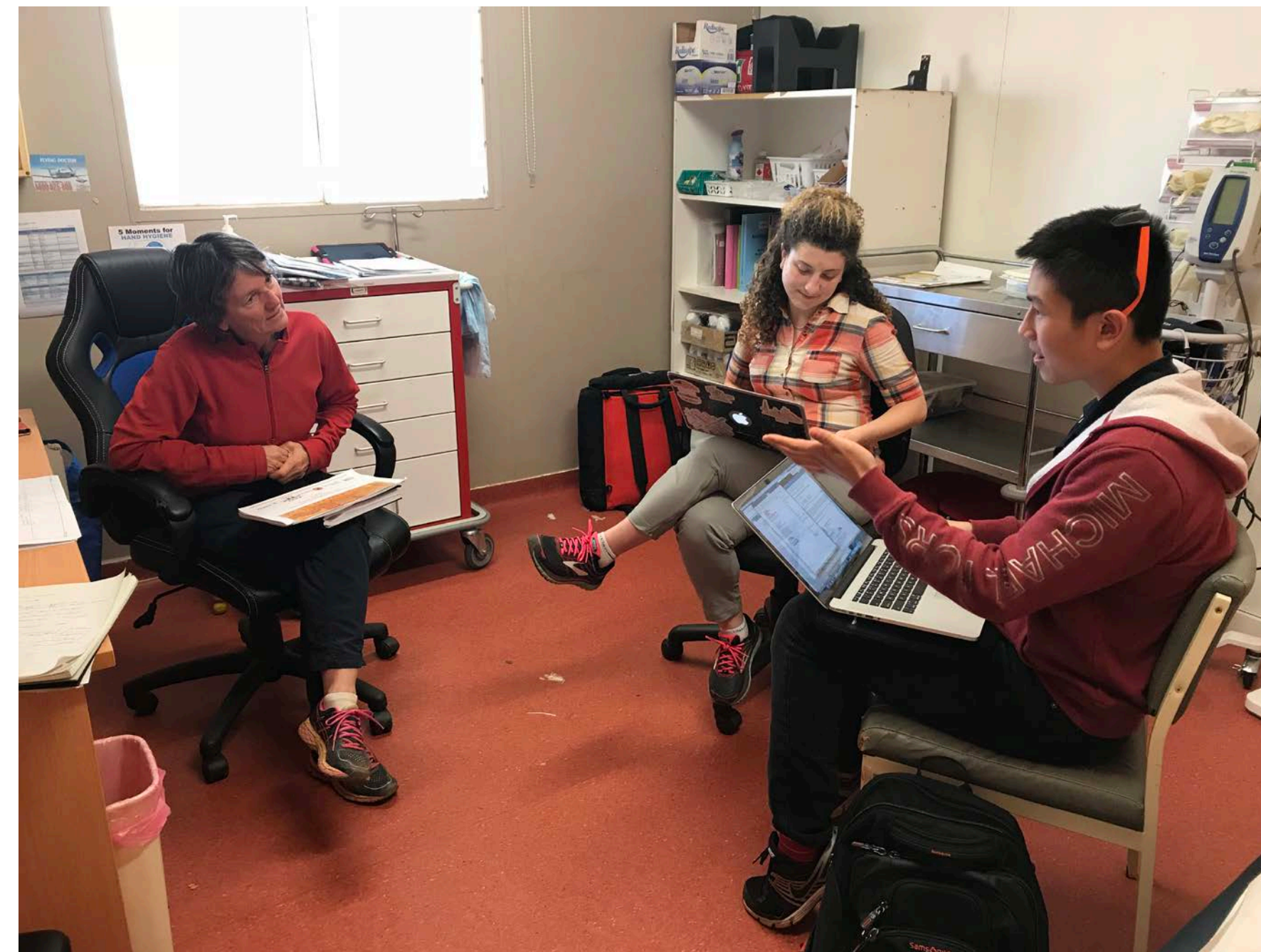
This internship provided me with the opportunity to learn about the reasons behind the Aboriginal people's mistrust of western medical staff and to work with a dedicated group of researchers to build a foundation for a relationship between the two.

Work Profile

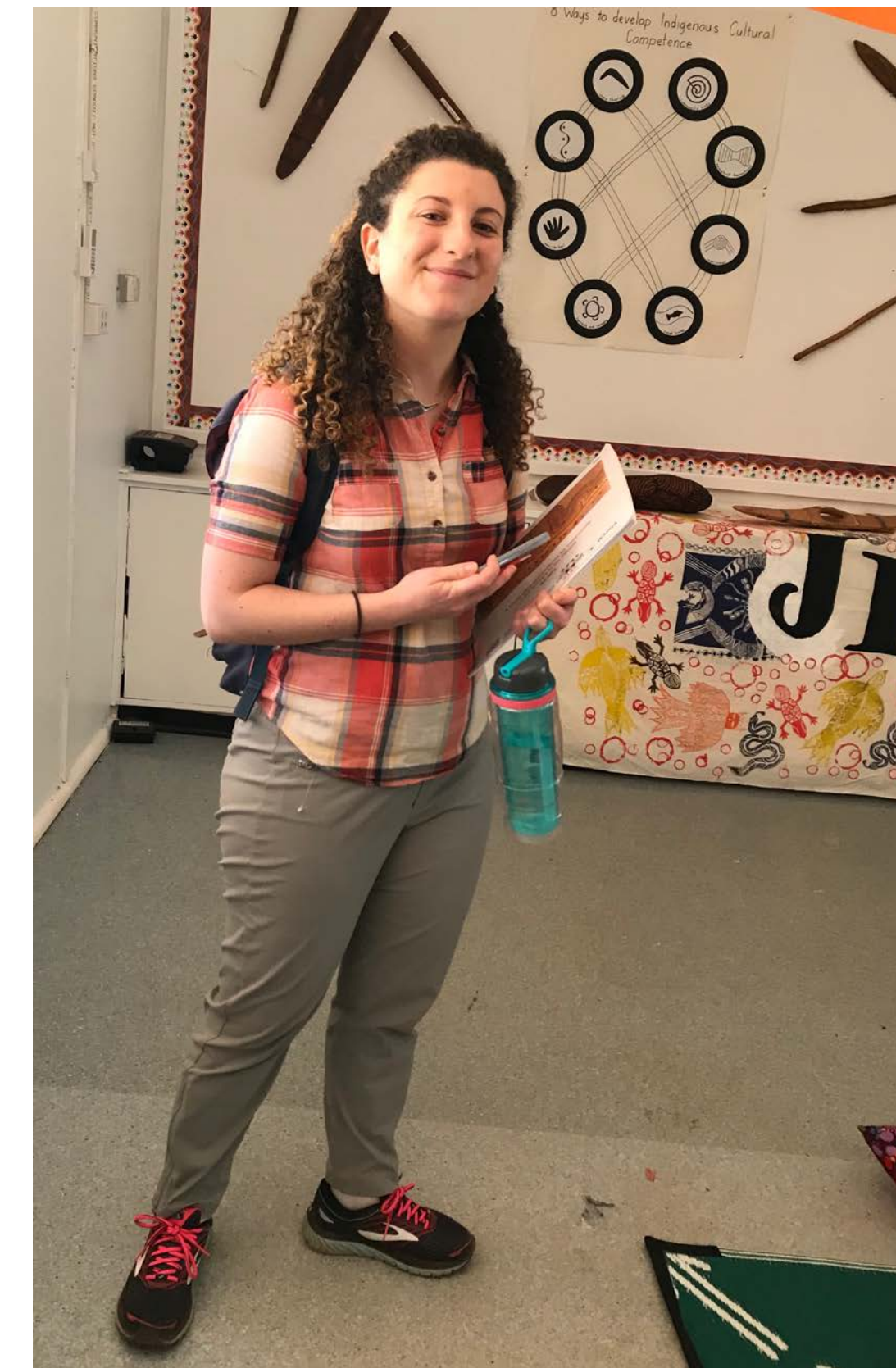
- The goal of my work was to eventually train Aboriginal community members to be community care workers and educate their friends and families about skin infections in a culturally competent manner

Reflection

- This summer, I created the materials that CCW's would use to teach other Aboriginal people about the necessity to treat skin infections.
- I traveled between Perth and the Western desert talking to people about their concerns with the way the clinics are currently run.
- I recruited members of the community who were interested in becoming CCW's
- So far, there has been a **100% retention rate** in the CCW's recruited



- Aboriginal people felt that they should be more involved in their own treatment.
- There is a long history of medical experimentation by Western physicians on Aboriginal people.
- Frequent miscommunication between clinic staff and community members gets classified as noncompliance.



The Role of the Community Care Worker

- The CCW's would teach community members about identifying, preventing, and treating skin infections.
- They would also be responsible for delivering medications.

Looking Ahead

- This internship has confirmed my desires to work in the medical field and to study cultural competence in the context of medicine,
- Learning about the history of erasure of the Aboriginal people in Australia has encouraged me even more to want to work with underrepresented populations.

Questions

- How effective will CCW's be in reducing the number and severity of skin infections in Aboriginal populations?
- Even if skin infections are reduced, will school attendance improve?
- Would the introduction of the CCW reduce the turnover of clinic staff?

Conclusion

Cultural competence is an essential part of any medical pursuit and can drastically change health outcomes and patient satisfaction.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my supervisor, Roz Walker, and the other staff at TKI, especially Paula Wyndow, I would also like to acknowledge the Health Grand Challenges program and CHW for sponsoring this opportunity.