RURAL HEALTH RESEARCH: LOCAL FOCUS, LOCAL BENEFITS

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THE Spinifex Network, a national rural health and medical research alliance, has published six rapid reviews in an MJA Supplement published today.

The aim of the Supplement, coordinated by Associate Professor Sonya Osborne from the University of Southern Queensland’s School of Nursing and Midwifery, and Dr Donella Piper, Program Manager for NSW Regional Health Partners, is to introduce the Spinifex Network and to showcase a few of the many rural, regional and remote health research priority areas.

The four priority areas discussed in the supplement are:

- Food security in rural and remote Australian communities: Alston and colleagues (Chapter 1) synthesise evidence on initiatives for improving food environments in regional and remote populations;
- Impact of natural disasters on people living in rural and remote areas: Goodwin and colleagues (Chapter 2) review the research on the effectiveness of health and social interventions in supporting the physical and mental health needs of rural populations; Curtin and colleagues (Chapter 3) focus specifically on the short and long term effects of bushfire on children;
- Recruitment and retention of a sustainable rural health workforce: Walsh and colleagues (Chapter 4) review rural health workforce policies and highlight the lack of research; Gillam and colleagues (Chapter 5) examine publicly available data sources currently used to inform health workforce and health services planning;
- Global crises affecting people in rural and remote settings: Lieschke and colleagues (Chapter 6) describe the complexity and challenges of tapering opioids in patients with chronic non-cancer pain.

For more on the Spinifex Network visit https://spinifexnetwork.com.au

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