

Paediatrician's inspiring work in Timor-Leste

There are strong links between the Northern Territory Department of Health and the health system in Timor-Leste, resulting from many years of collaboration and partnership. A MOU between the Hospital Nacional Guido Valadares in Dili and the Royal Darwin Hospital has provided the basis for a paediatric registrar exchange program which has been in place since 2016. So far there have been 5 Australian paediatric advanced trainees from Australia work in Timor-Leste, and 8 Timorese paediatric registrars who have done 6-month rotations at Royal Darwin Hospital.

Further opportunities to invest in training, program development and health systems research have emerged with a focus on rheumatic heart disease, tuberculosis, antimicrobial resistance and surveillance and control of communicable diseases. The Pedrino study in 2018 enabled a collaboration between partners in Timor-Leste and health and education services in Maningrida, to screen children for rheumatic heart disease and test the reliability of a novel approach to handheld echocardiography screening. This provided an opportunity for two Timorese doctors to scan children in Maningrida, and two Aboriginal community workers to join the team scanning children in Timor-Leste. Starting in July 2018, the STRONG TL (Surveillance Training, Research Opportunities and National Guidelines for communicable disease control in Timor-Leste) project has brought together a collaboration between Menzies School of Health Research, the NT Centre for Disease Control, the RDH microbiology laboratory, the Timor-Leste Ministry of Health, the National Health Laboratory of Timor-Leste and Maluk Timor, to build capacity in the health system for the diagnosis, management, surveillance and prevention of infectious diseases.

Opportunities to get involved exist across many of these programs. Maluk Timor is an Australian NGO focused on building capacity and partnerships in health in Timor-Leste, and many clinicians from the NT have taken the opportunity to donate or contribute directly to their work.



If anyone wants more information, they are very welcome to contact Josh on Whatsapp or email josh.francis@menzies.edu.au

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