Reviewer’s report

Title: Challenges and strategies for cohort retention and data collection in an Indigenous population: Australian Aboriginal Birth Cohort

Version: 2 Date: 6 January 2014

Reviewer: heather dean

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This paper is a well written and informative summary of the strategies used by the AABC to overcome unique challenges of maintaining a research birth cohort in an isolated and diverse Indigenous population. There are important similarities and differences to other Indigenous populations around the world that have been highlighted by the authors. They have incorporated increased engagement of Aboriginal people in the conduct of the study. They have demonstrated the critical importance of longstanding relationships with communities in building trust in order to continue the research. They have described the challenges in language that reflects their respect for the people participating in the research. They have shared their wisdom gained over 25 years for use by younger investigator teams in the early stages of longitudinal clinical research. Since the development origins of health and disease is currently a high profile area of research, this type of descriptive analysis is increasingly important for new and seasoned investigators alike.

Specific comments
1. It is curious that the authors chose for an international audience to use 3 states in the USA to compare the geographic size and population density of the Northern Territories. Perhaps a country with similar size and population density might be more appealing to an international audience.
2. page 5. line 13. The procedures for locating participants… is reference #11 correct? Should this be #10?
3. page 6 line 2-3. There appears to be a word missing.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

no competing interests.