

## **The Tasmanian Iodine Monitoring Program in Schools**

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**Background** - Tasmania has a long history of iodine deficiency. Various interventions and monitoring systems have been used through the years to ensure the population is replete.

**Objective** - To monitor the iodine levels of the Tasmanian population using urinary iodine (UI) to establish if the current intervention of iodised salt in bread is having an effect.

**Design** - A random cluster sampling method was used to determine grade 4 (9 yo) classes to be used in the monitoring. Classes were obtained through consultation with the Department of Education, Catholic Education Office and the Independent schools Council. Schools were then invited to participate and information sent to parents if schools agreed. The field officer then collected the samples from the school and arranged for analysis through pathology labs.

**Outcomes** - Currently 124 out of a possible 148 samples have been analysed. Compared to the Menzies centre study of 2000 there is a significant decrease ( $P > 0.01$ ) in the proportion of children with moderate deficiency. The median UI level is 97 (90 -109 95% CI). The proportion of children with levels  $< 50$  is 10.48% (5.93 – 17.59 95% CI).

**Conclusions** – The current method of intervention appears to be having an effect. However as this sample size represents less than half of the anticipated sample it is expected that the median and confidence intervals will change. As this is a five year program the preliminary results are encouraging.