

The rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health narrative

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Although we have seen some improvements in Indigenous health and chronic disease in remote Aboriginal communities, we still have significant ground to cover in order to see sustained changes. What could be described as a failure of both policy and practice can be partly explained by the emphasis on health strategies such as the SNAP framework (Smoking, Nutrition, Alcohol and Physical Activity). While the SNAP approach is important in many respects, the emerging evidence around a number of likely key drivers of indigenous health and social issues may be much broader than the individual approach. As the health system came to understand the relevance of social determinants on ill health, other evidence has emerged that can help to explain the lack of real improvement, especially in terms of remote Aboriginal health. The new evidence includes issues relating to epigenetics, early childhood adverse events, and poverty trap thinking. This new evidence can lead us to some valuable new interventions that may support generational changes in chronic disease status. This presentation will adopt a solutions focus and discuss some of these emerging issues.