

## Increasing engagement in exercise physiology-physiotherapy for Indigenous people living in remote communities

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Through delivering outreach services to remote communities across the Northern Territory, the service provider is delivering improved access to primary health care, namely exercise physiology and physiotherapy services, by currently visiting sixteen Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. The service provider engages individuals with chronic conditions with aim of improving health outcomes of communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Over a two-year period, chronic diseases treated using exercise therapy was recorded for each patient to produce data indicating total number of contacts made during scheduled visits. As a result, we have seen community engagement improve in the majority of communities serviced, building community capacity to address chronic conditions through physical activity and health eating.

Many barriers related to cultural, geographical, and other factors require addressing in attempting to engage community populations successfully. In striving to overcome this, a number of strategies are presently being applied which involve forming partnerships with key stakeholders, developing a strong rapport with community members, nurturing community ownership of programs and ensuring servicing remains flexible. Achieving these then enables promotion of community engagement in allowing individuals in the community to feel supported and comfortable in participating in a service that is provided specifically for them and created in consultation with them.