


Viruses in May 2015


**VIRAL INFECTIONS AND
PUBLIC HEALTH IN INDIGENOUS
AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES**

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BACKGROUND

- In 2011, 669 900 people were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 3% of all Australians
 - Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders live in major cities (35% per cent) and inner regional areas (22%). 21% live in remote and very remote areas (2% comparison)
 - 36 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged less than 15 compared with 19 per cent of the non-Indigenous population.
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VIRAL – AND BACTERIAL - INFECTIONS

- Tuberculosis notifications were 11X higher for Indigenous people than for non-Indigenous people in 2005-2009
 - Hep A lower
 - Hep B 3X higher
 - Hep C 4X higher
 - HIV = in both communities
 - Gonorrhoea 30x higher
 - Scabies in 50% of Indigenous children and 25% of adults
 - 14-40% may have HTLV1.
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TRACHOMA

“If you look at all these diseases that the Aboriginal people suffer from, they are the same diseases that were prevalent in [white] Melbourne a hundred years ago,” says Professor Jonathan Carapetis, director of the Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin.

Source:

<http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/health/trachoma-eye-health#ixzz3Yqv8g8Xv>

Viruses associated with ALRI in Indigenous Children

Respiratory syncytial virus

Influenza virus types A and B

Rhinovirus

Parainfluenza virus types 1, 2 and 3

Adenovirus

Human Metapneumovirus

Bocavirus

Human Coronavirus

- *Hannah Moore WA*

THE STATE OF PLAY

- Data from state and territory infectious disease collections are collated and published by the National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NNDSS), but Indigenous status is often not reported for large proportions of notifications
- Improvements to personal and environmental cleanliness, and the introduction of new immunisations (vaccines), have greatly reduced the number of people who catch some communicable diseases.



ABORIGINAL HEALTH

Aboriginal Community Control: National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party, 1989

Wholistic health: emotional and cultural well-being of the whole community.

Self-Determination

Cultural Respect

Leadership

Partnership.



WHAT WE NEED TO BE DOING

- **Strengthening community functioning**
 - **Reinforcing positive behaviours**
 - **Improving education participation, regional economic development, housing and environmental health**
 - **Performing spiritual healing.**
- **Fourth National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Blood-borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2014–2017**