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Understanding Diabetes in a Rural Aboriginal Community

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Abstract

This thesis explores the way seven Aboriginal peoples from Yidiyi, who dwell in a remote region of the Northern Territory Australia, understand and treat their diabetes. In 1935, Aboriginal clan groups who dwelled in their own totemic land, mixing only in times of ceremony, migrated into the town of Yidiyi to live as a community. These people have, for the last eighty years, been adjusting to living with and integrating certain aspects of Western culture. With diabetes statistics rising for Australian Aboriginal peoples, my participants negotiate how they deal with and treat their diabetes. For Aboriginal peoples, health and wellbeing is holistic and interconnected with all aspects of life. To maintain health is to maintain positive interactions with all human and non-human entities. This thesis contributes to the literature that argues for the following: an understanding of Australian Aboriginal culture in Western settings; an integration of local Aboriginal healing methods within Western clinical environments; and continuous efforts that work to improve bicultural relationships.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Chapter One	
Introduction/Background	1
Introduction	1
Organisation of thesis	3
Personal experience	4
Geographical context	5
The town	5
Local colonial history	6
Contemporary organisation of tribal groups	8
Local governmentality	11
<i>Marl</i>	13
The clinic	15
Conclusion	16
Chapter Two	
Literature Review.....	17
Introduction.....	17
Biomedicine and Diabetes	18
Biomedical care	19
Treating Australian Aboriginal peoples for diabetes within a biomedical care model	22
The importance of Indigenous knowledge.....	23
An Aboriginal perspective of biomedical treatment.....	23
Demand sharing	26
Sorcery	27
Emotion.....	27
Humans and the environment	28
Taking an Indigenous studies focus	32
Conclusion	33
Chapter Three	
Methodology	34
Introduction.....	34
Indigenous methodologies	36
Neutralising power.....	37
Local Aboriginal culture	38
Narrative interviews.....	39
Observations	42
Recruiting participants	42
Key participants	43
Fieldnotes and journal.....	45
Ethical considerations	46
Conclusion	49

Chapter Four	
Healing diabetes in Yidiyi	51
Introduction	51
Aboriginal health beliefs	52
Aboriginal autonomy	53
Country	54
Bush tucker	56
Body sweat	57
<i>Rith</i>	59
Elders	61
Christianity	63
The clinic	64
Conclusion	68
Chapter Five	
Exploring contradictions	70
Introduction	70
Bush medicine	71
Aboriginal healers	75
Diabetes and the cultural meaning of food	81
<i>Yamurr</i> , the future of decisions, and diabetes	84
Conclusion	85
Chapter Six	
Local social structure, relationships and the clinic	87
Introduction	87
Sensing the land as social	87
Local social disharmony, sorcery, ill health and death	88
Social obligations	90
Demand sharing	91
Gender	93
Local gender protocols and the clinic	94
Relationships	95
Relationships with the clinic	95
Conclusion	99
Chapter Seven	
Conclusion	101
References	105
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Key questions for people with diabetes	111
List of tables	
Table 1: Clan groups in the Port Keats region	10