

92319 Contemporary Indigenous Health and Wellbeing

Week one

Reading – Closing the Gap

Closing the gap is a strategy that aims to reduce Indigenous disadvantage with respect to life expectancy, child mortality, access to early childhood education, educational achievement, employment outcomes. Endorsed by the Australian Government in March 2008, Closing the gap is a formal commitment developed in response to the call of the Social Justice Report 2005 to achieve Indigenous health equality within 25 years.

The targets of the Closing The Gap initiative are:

- Close the life expectancy gap within a generation (by 2031)
- Halve the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade (by 2018)
- Ensure access to early childhood education for all Indigenous four year olds in remote communities within five years (by 2013)
- Halve the gap in reading, writing and numeracy achievements for children within a decade (by 2018)
- Halve the gap for Indigenous students in year 12 attainment rates (by 2020)
- Halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade (by 2018).

Lecture – Social determinants of health and primary health care

The biomedical model of health

- Health is an absence of disease or infirmity
- Preventive health care – focuses on risk factors and personal health behaviour
- Emphasis on health education
- Treats people in isolation from their environments

The social model of health

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity
- Health is a fundamental human right and the attainment of the highest possible level of health is an important global social goal

Social determinants of health and wellbeing

- Socioeconomic characteristics
 - Literacy and numeracy

- School retention/attainment
- Non-school qualifications
- Employment
- Income
- Social and emotional wellbeing
 - Positive wellbeing
 - Psychological distress
 - Life stressors
 - Discrimination
- Community capacity
 - Single-parent families
 - Child protection
 - Community safety
 - Criminal justice system contact
- Behaviour factors
 - Substance abuse
 - Physical activity
 - Dietary intake
 - Unhealthy body weight
- Housing and transport
 - Housing tenure
 - Functional housing
 - Overcrowding
 - Homelessness
 - Transport

ATSI health compared to other Australians

- Median income – one third lower
- Unemployment rate – 4.2x higher
- 35% live in housing with structural issues (electrical, plumbing, roofing etc.)
- 55% finish Year 12 (versus 83%)
- 6% have bachelor degree (versus 26%)
- Median age – 21.8 years (versus 37.6 years)
- 36% under 15 years (versus 18%)
- 3% over 65 years (versus 14%)

Primary health care

- Community health care
- Based on a social model of health
- Provides a range of health, welfare and support services
- Easy to access – walk in
- It is the first point of contact of the individual/family with the health care system