

Impact of swimming pools on health and school attendance of Aboriginal children in 2 remote W.A. communities

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Background

Aboriginal Health

- High rates of skin disease, renal disease, rheumatic heart disease
- Excessive ear disease
- Poor school attendance rates
- High rates of drowning
- Limited opportunity for physical exercise
- Little or no recreational facilities
- Social problems: crime, lack of employment
- Anecdotes re health benefits of swimming pool

AIM



Evaluate the change in health, educational & social impact following the introduction of swimming pools in 2 remote WA Aboriginal communities.

Western Australia



Community 1
n=180; 1200km

Community 2
n=250; 1600km



RESULTS

- 30% Improvement in middle ear infections
- 80% improvement in skin sores
- Reduction in antibiotic use
- Better school attendance “NO SCHOOL NO POOL”

Other Results

- **Overwhelming support by both communities**
- **No disease outbreaks**
- **Police reports: Reduction in crime**
- **Royal Life Saving Association: Increased knowledge of water safety & swimming competence**
- **Facilities used for recreation, education**

Conclusion

- **No negative effects**
- **Significant health and social gains in short term**
- **Overwhelming community support**
- **Long term gains: health, education, exercise, crime, reduced antibiotic use, morbidity and mortality**