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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