



Rheumatic heart disease a worry in the Top End



NT AUSTRALIAN researchers say Indigenous children in the Northern Territory are up to three times more likely to suffer rheumatic heart disease than children in other remote areas. Kathryn Roberts, from the Menzies School of Health Research

in Darwin, led a team that examined 32 communities across the Northern Territory's Top End, central Australia, far north Queensland including the Torres Strait, and Western Australia's Kimberley.

They found the prevalence of RHD was high in Indigenous children and comparable to figures from developing countries,

but was even worse in the Top End.

The researchers said poor socio-economic conditions and overcrowded housing were significant risk factors for the disease.

"Extreme disadvantage would provide a plausible explanation for the higher prevalence of RHD in the Top End," the researchers wrote. – AAP