

Indigenous kidney patients call for equitable care in new report

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Indigenous people with kidney disease living in remote and rural Australia as well as their support networks have made a resounding call for equitable health care closer to home in a report released today by Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies).

In the '*Indigenous Patient Voices: Gathering Perspectives, Finding Solutions for Chronic and End-Stage Kidney Disease*' 2017 symposium report, renal patients and carers from across northern and central Australia highlighted the need for more holistic care and services to be made available closer to home.

Report lead author Dr Jaquelyne Hughes said current health care systems met medical care needs, but missed the mark in helping Indigenous people feel connected to their country, communities and culture while they received treatment.

"We heard, overwhelmingly, of how people felt lonely, distressed and isolated following relocation to access treatment," Dr Hughes said.

"Some patients reported homelessness and desperation because of this disconnect. They are not rejecting the desire to live well; they are rejecting the only model of care available to them.

"The care available to kidney patients was designed by and for people who live close to cities. This automatically excludes people who live further away and in the bush."

The report follows the Indigenous Patient Voices Symposium held during September in Darwin in conjunction with the 53rd Annual Scientific Meeting of the Australia and New Zealand Society of Nephrology (ANZSN).

Dr Hughes is one of many health practitioners urging the Australian state, territory and federal government health ministers to respond to this call to action.

"Consumer engagement is a national priority of Australian health services, and the symposium showed many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are willing to provide feedback to support the necessary health care transformation," she said.

"We've highlighted the patient-reported barriers to accessing quality services for chronic and end-stage kidney disease, how and where services are delivered, how information is communicated and developing pathways and career opportunities for Indigenous Australians within the renal health care workforce."

The report is available via the Menzies website at <http://bit.ly/2znSx7d>.

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Menzies School of Health Research

Menzies School of Health Research is one of Australia's leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving Indigenous, global and tropical health. Menzies has a history of over 30 years of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, joining with partners across the Asia-Pacific as well as Indigenous communities across northern and central Australia. Menzies collaborates to create new knowledge, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.