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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR
HEALTH X AGEING

MEDIA STATEMENT

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DEMENTIA CAN BE PREVENTED IN REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

A new study published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* has identified dementia risk factors for Aboriginal Australians living in remote communities.

“The good news is that several of the identified risk factors can be altered,” says lead author and research fellow at the Western Australian Centre for Health and Ageing, Dr Kate Smith. “There is currently no cure for dementia, so we must do all we can to minimise the risk. In any case, prevention is always better than cure.”

“Australia isn’t quite the lucky country for everyone. If you are an older Aboriginal person, male, have had no formal education, a current smoker, or have a history of head injury, strokes or epilepsy then you are at greater risk of developing dementia.

“We will have to address smoking, head injury and other chronic disease, and the educational opportunities available to people in these communities, to reduce the rate of dementia.”

The Centre’s previous research identified an alarming rate of dementia in remote Aboriginal communities. People living in these communities were five times more likely to develop dementia when compared to non Indigenous Australians.

“The information from this [study](#) will assist health reform and help plan for the best way to address and reverse these poor health outcomes in remote Aboriginal communities,” Dr Smith said.

The researchers will conduct a follow-up study to investigate other possible risk factors for dementia, such as obesity and depression.

MEDIA REFERENCE

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