

Produced by the Rural Health Education Foundation
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A Sticky Issue: Otitis Media and Indigenous Children

Otitis media (middle ear infection) and subsequent hearing problems are a major health and development concern for many Indigenous children in Australia. In some remote Aboriginal communities, rates of tympanic membrane perforation exceed 60% and up to 50% of school children possibly require hearing aids. Studies have shown that in Aboriginal communities, the onset of otitis media frequently occurs within 3 months of birth and progresses to chronic suppurative otitis media in 60% of cases.

The condition frequently continues throughout early childhood, causing ongoing hearing impairment throughout vital schooling years; with some Indigenous children enduring chronic otitis media and its associated discomfort for the majority of their childhood. This cycle of chronic infection is compounded by overcrowding, poor living conditions, poor hygiene standards and limited access to appropriate healthcare services.

Chronic infection not only impairs hearing in the short term; it also affects essential early childhood development, in particular speech development. Permanent hearing loss may also develop as result of long term damage to conductive anatomy. Hearing loss can affect a child's education and social relationships, job opportunities in adulthood and possibly be a contributing factor in socially unacceptable behaviours.

This program discusses the barriers to achieving better outcomes for children with otitis media, and proposes strategies to overcome them. It also discusses diagnosis, management, and treatment of the different stages/forms of otitis media. The particular focus is on Indigenous children, and the complications that arise in rural and remote areas.

Learning Outcomes for this program:

At the end of this program viewers will be able to:

- Recognise the burden of Otitis Media in the Indigenous Australian community
- Identify risk factors and the diagnostic criteria for the various forms of Otitis Media
- Initiate prevention strategies for Otitis Media
- Adopt culturally appropriate treatment and management strategies for Otitis Media

Panel of Speakers

Chair: **Dr Norman Swan** - Presenter of the *Health Report* on ABC Radio National

Mr Joe Daby - Aboriginal Health Worker, Ear Health Specialist, Maternal Child and Youth Health, NT

Dr Ray Jones - General Practitioner, Bulgarr Ngaru Aboriginal Medical Centre, Grafton NSW

Dr David McIntosh - Ear Nose Throat Surgeon, ENT Specialists, QLD

Dr Andrew White - Remote Area Paediatrician working in Alice Springs.

This program is accredited or endorsed for professional development by RACGP, ACRRM, RCNA and APA.

[Find a Satellite viewing site](#)

Broadcast details

Tuesday 25th May 2010

Live satellite broadcast (on Channel 4) at:

- 8.00pm in ACT, NSW, TAS, QLD & VIC
- 7.30pm in SA & NT
- 6.00pm in WA

(broadcast repeated in WA on Channel 23 at 8.00pm)

Friday 28th May 2010

Repeat satellite broadcast on Channel 23 at:

- 12.30pm in ACT, NSW, TAS, QLD & VIC
- 12 noon in SA & NT
- 10.30am in WA

This program can be webstreamed after the broadcast and will also be available as an audio podcast or downloadable audio MP3 file and DVD.

For more details visit the program page on the Foundation's http://www.rhef.com.au/programs/program-1/?program_id=420

