



Damning report on indigenous health

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THERE are major gaps in child health services in remote Aboriginal communities, according to new research.

The current edition of the *Medical Journal of Australia* features reports on Aboriginal health issues.

One found existing health services did not help Aboriginal children overcome medical and social problems.

Written by Ross Bailie from the Menzies School of Health Research and his colleagues, the report said better follow-up

systems were needed.

They analysed 11 remote health centres, including four in the Territory.

Poor growth, chronic ear and respiratory diseases and anaemia were common health problems for children living in these communities.

The authors criticised the referral and follow-up procedures, saying they were "particularly poor".

They said: "Without effective systems for follow up, simply screening children for disease and adverse social cir-

cumstances will result in little or no benefit."

Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT executive officer John Paterson said most indigenous people in the NT did not have access to adequate health care.

More resources were needed to provide "comprehensive primary health care".

And violence, alcohol and drug misuse, housing and youth suicide were not being addressed by the intervention.