

# Young indigenous females at highest risk of assault-related injuries

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A new study has placed young indigenous females at the highest risk of sustaining assault-related injuries in Queensland.

The study, conducted by UQ's Centre of National Research on Disability and [Rehabilitation Medicine](#) (CONROD), compared the effects of gender, indigenous status and remoteness to health services on the occurrence of assault-related injuries in children and adolescents.

CONROD's Professor Justin Kenardy said assault-related injury was a devastating consequence of violence towards children and adolescents.

"It is a prominent cause of morbidity and mortality, however, reliable data sources are scarce and there has been few studies examining the possible [risk factors](#) that contribute to this violence," Professor Kenardy said.

Professor Kenardy's research team set out to collect and compare injury admissions data from fourteen Queensland [public hospitals](#) included on the Queensland Trauma Registry between January 2005 and December 2008.

The data indicated the [age distribution](#) of assault-related injuries peaked in infants, aged younger than 1 year, and those aged 14-17 years.

The research team also found that 60 per cent of infants with assault-related injuries were female and 10 per cent of all injuries occurring in

infants were assault-related.

For both [males and females](#), the likelihood of sustaining an assault-related injury was significantly lower in the 2-5 years and the 6-12 years [age groups](#) when compared to those aged younger than 1 year.

There was, however, no statistically significant difference between those aged 13-17 years and those under one-years-old.

Indigenous females were at the highest risk of sustaining assault-related injuries, followed by indigenous males, non-indigenous males and non-indigenous females.

Indigenous young people were at higher risk of sustaining an assault-related injury than non-indigenous young people in regional and remote areas.

"Trauma in children, especially very young children, can have significant short and long term physical and psychological effects on the developing child," Professor Kenardy said.

"We hope that these findings will lead to increased awareness of the high risk of assault-related injury in infants as well as [adolescents](#).

"Any response should involve a preventative focus on reduction of violence in families and indigenous communities, and early intervention following traumatic injury."

Provided by University of Queensland

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