

Acute lower respiratory infections in Indigenous infants in Australia's Northern Territory

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Nurse and PhD student Gabrielle McCallum examining a baby at Royal Darwin Hospital with acute bronchiolitis. Credit: CDU

Menzies senior research fellow, Dr. Michael Binks' paper, Acute lower

respiratory infections in Indigenous infants in Australia's Northern Territory across three eras of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (2006-15): a population-based cohort study was recently published in *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*.

The study examined acute [lower respiratory infections](#) (ALRI) hospital admissions among Indigenous infants in the Northern Territory from 2006 to 2015, across three periods of different PCV use.

It found bacterial-coded pneumonia hospitalizations were reduced by 30 percent during the era of PCV13 immunization supporting its ongoing use in the region. However, despite the reduction, one in five Indigenous infants born in the region continue to be hospitalized with an ALRI in their first year of life, as was the case 15 years earlier.

In addition, the study found that rates of maternal smoking, [gestational diabetes](#), anemia, preterm birth, and low birthweight babies remain high with the burden of ALRI hospitalization highest among those living in remote communities and in Central Australia.

The study suggests future gains would require multifaceted environmental and biomedical approaches.

More information: Michael J Binks et al. Acute lower respiratory infections in Indigenous infants in Australia's Northern Territory across three eras of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine use (2006–15): a population-based cohort study, *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/S2352-4642\(20\)30090-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(20)30090-0)

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