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| **Service integration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood development: A multiple case study from New South Wales and Queensland** |
| **Background/Objectives (832 characters)**The vulnerabilities and intergenerational poverty experienced by Indigenous children cannot be ignored. Disadvantage begins early with rates of infant/child mortality more three times higher than non-Indigenous Australians; twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable early in life and ten times more likely to be removed from their families by child protection authorities than non-Indigenous children in Australia. Integrated service delivery approaches led by Indigenous organisations are central to addressing the challenges facing many Indigenous families in Australia. They are a key access point for families and link families to a range of services based on community needs. The research seeks to understand the extent to which services are available and integrated to meet the needs of Aboriginal children and families. (832) **Methods (477 characters)** Purposive sampling was used to select two sites: Nikinpa ACFC (New South Wales) and Palm Island ACFC (Queensland). A literature review on cultural determinants of health, early childhood health and development was completed to identify the relationship between culture, place, health and wellbeing and inform methods development. All data was considered together. Data was analysed using NVivo software and themes validated with community before finalising the research results.**Results (480 characters)**There was a common process of service integration of Indigenous early years services: supportive and enabling environments; creating the integrated model and getting started; consolidating practice; sustaining/expanding or downgrading. Four themes emerged as critical to the operations of Indigenous integrated early year services: (i) Aboriginal leadership (ii) Partnerships (iv) Connection to culture and community (v) Macro environments (socio-cultural-political environments). **Discussion (514 characters)**Results demonstrate that integrated services are responding to the needs of families however there are critical program components that remain largely unfunded. There remains a disconnect in the policy sentiment, resourcing and implementation. Policy reform needs to accommodate greater respect for place-based community programming which includes adequate resourcing for Indigenous leadership, governance, partnerships and connection to culture as key determinants of health for Indigenous children and families. **Keywords:** Service integration; aboriginal health; early childhood education and care; indigenous |