

# Nutrition an issue for Indigenous Australians

August 6 2014

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Nutrition has not been given enough priority in national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health policy in recent years.

This is the finding from a study published in the latest issue of *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*.

Led by Jennifer Browne from La Trobe University, the study examined Aboriginal-specific [health policies](#) and strategies developed between 2000 and 2012.

"Increased inclusion of nutrition in Aboriginal health policy was identified during the first half of this period, but less during the second where a much greater emphasis was placed on smoking," Ms Browne said.

"There is a life expectancy gap of 11.5 years for Aboriginal males and 9.7 years for Aboriginal females compared to non-Aboriginal Australians.

"Nutrition contributes to many indicators of wellbeing, including [maternal health](#), birthweight, child development and oral health.

"It is an important determinant of the chronic diseases that reduce Aboriginal life expectancy.

"Improving nutrition is essential for promoting Aboriginal [health](#), and this needs to be supported by policy at the national level."

Provided by Wiley

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