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Illustrating the benefits of using a mixed methods evaluation design in the context of a remote Indigenous community

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Indigenous Australian children living in remote communities currently experience a high burden of infectious disease. Frequent bouts of illness through recurring and chronic infections in young children undermine their general wellbeing and impede normal child growth and development.

A mixed method evaluation design was used to investigate how poor housing, crowding and a poor standard of hygiene are contributing to the poor health of young Indigenous children in one remote Indigenous community. Information obtained from two sources was used. Data obtained from a community level housing infrastructure survey and focus group findings. Quantitative survey data is generally limited in its value being only descriptive. However, using this data, informed by explanatory qualitative information, it was possible to identify the underlying causes of problems and identify solutions to problems that are more likely to be successful. The methods and process employed in this study were designed to promote the trustworthiness of its findings.