

Indigenous Aussies have shorter lives

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Australia's top medical body wants the government to spend \$1.5 million to boost primary health care services for the nation's indigenous population.

The Australian Medical Association says the money, to be spent over four years, is necessary to increase the life expectancy of aborigines. A study published in the latest Medical Journal of Australia shows the gap in life expectancy between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in the Northern Territory, home to most aborigines, has increased in the past 25 years.

AMA president Mukesh Haikerwal says the study showed "there has been an improvement in overall mortality rates and the life expectancy is better for indigenous people, but it has improved more so in non-indigenous people -- so that means the current gap has actually widened."

Haikerwal says concerted government investment across a wide range of sectors could reverse these statistics in the next 10 years.

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