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**Congress Stream:** Rural health research in practice – connecting for change

**Alternate Stream:** Aboriginal health – Closing the Gap/opening connections

**Abstract Title:**  An intervention for young people with multiple and complex needs: preliminary results.

**Authors**: Alice Knight, Anthony Shakeshaft, Alys Havard, Myf Maple, Bernie Shakeshaft

**Background**

Young people with multiple and complex needs (YPMCN) experience harms associated with multiple risk factors. Young Indigenous Australians are disproportionately represented amongst this group.Despite this, very little is known about effective interventions. This paper aims to: i) describe an Armidale based intervention for YPMCN; ii) describe an evaluation of the program; and iii) report preliminary results from the evaluation.

**Method**

In order to evaluate this intervention, a series of steps were undertaken: i) researchers and intervention staff worked together to define the program; ii) a survey instrument was developed to capture baseline data from participants covering the domains of mental health and wellbeing, education and employment, criminal activity, substance use, and demographic information; iii) the intervention was implemented utilising a multiple baseline design in 3 rural communities in NSW; and iv) post-test survey data were collected to determine intervention impact at an individual-level, whilst routinely collected crime data were analysed to determine intervention impact at a community-level.

**Results**

Baseline survey data and preliminary outcome data will be presented.

**Implications of the research**

This is the most methodologically rigorous evaluation of an intervention for YPMCN that has been undertaken anywhere in the world to date. It addresses a number of important problems: first, for YPMCN, it improves their mental health, substance use, and crime outcomes; second, for communities, it reduces social disruption and economic costs; and third, for governments and policy makers, it assists them to invest in relevant and effective interventions for YPMCN.