ABORIGINAL HEALTH AND HISTORY
For Edna May
Contents

Figures xi
Tables xiii
Preface xv

1 Caduceus and Clipboard

Setting and set 1
The region 1
Guiding frames 4
Methodologies 8
Research: paths and mazes 9
Mortality review 11
Suicides and cells 11
Pilot community surveys 13
Population-based survey 17
Fruitful digressions 21
Notes 23

2 Time 24

Introduction 24
Acts and actors 26
New arrivals in an old land 35
Exploration 35
Settlement: gold, cattle, pearls, converts 36
Government nomads 47
Opportunity and exclusion 49
Notes 51
### Contents

3  *Mabarn* and Medicine 52

- Introduction 52
- Dangerous occupations 52
- Systems in conflict 54
  - Perceptions and policy 57
- Stigmatised contagions 58
  - Venereal diseases 58
  - Leprosy 61
- Hospitals and beyond 67
  - Changing fortunes 72
- Notes 75

4  Mortality in a Time of Change 76

- The population 76
- The study 78
- Findings 80
- Discussion 86
- Notes 89

5  Alcohol 90

- Introduction 90
- Setting 91
- Frames 92
- Alcohol misuse: theories and consequences 92
  - In the general population 92
  - Correlates and consequences 94
  - In the Aboriginal population 94
- Quantitative studies 102
  - Alcohol 'problems' and impressionistic reports 103
  - Clinical studies 104
  - Population studies 105
- Aboriginal alcohol consumption in the Kimberley 109
  - The sample 110
  - Assessments 110
  - Questions 111
  - Results 112
- Summary 125
- Notes 127

6  Suicide 133

- Introduction 133
- Definitions 134
Contents

ix

Suicide and indigenous populations 135
Suicide and Aborigines 139
Aborigines: incarceration and suicide 141
The Royal Commission 141
International experience 144
Kimberley suicides in custody 145
Lock-up study 147
Kimberley Aboriginal suicides: 1957–1989 149
Suicides: 1957–1987 150
The parental generation 156
Related issues 157
Alcohol and suicide 157
Suicide and Aboriginal social integration 160
Notes 162

7 Bloodlines: Violence to Self and Others 166

Self-mutilation 166
Ritual mutilation 167
Non-traditional self-mutilation 168
Intentional personal violence 173
Present-day Aboriginal violence 174
Aboriginal personal violence: a paradigm 175
‘Mission boys' and ‘warriors' 187
Convergences 190
Notes 198

8 Issues of Identity 200

Introduction 200
Definitions and usage 201
Aborigines and Aboriginality 202
Resilience or stagnation? 202
Levels of continuity 204
Elements of change 209
Contact and conflict 209
Adaptation and survival 210
Assimilation and self-determination 218
Consequences for children 229
Anomie, exclusion and powerlessness 236
Living on the edge: gambling and Aborigines 241
Aboriginal gambling in the Kimberley 243
Summary 251
Notes 252


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 Structures and Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural impositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imposed constructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imposed structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imposed problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imposed solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induced change: 'development' and its vicissitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution and allied theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social change and development: a paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And Australian Aborigines?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Figures

1.1 Map of the Kimberley region, Western Australia  
4.1 Deaths from external causes as a proportion of Kimberley Aboriginal deaths  
5.1 Current drinking status, for males and females  
5.2 Alcohol consumption, by age and sex  
5.3 Severe psychological reactions, for males and females  
5.4 Severe psychological reactions and culturally informed paranormal experiences  
5.5 Self-harmful ideation, self-mutilation, suicidal ideation and attempts, for males and females  
5.6 Incarceration history, for males and females  
5.7 Daily combined lock-up and prison censuses, May 1987  
7.1 Hypothetical cohort effect among Kimberley Aborigines  
7.2 Predisposing factors for current Aboriginal violence in the Kimberley: a hypothetical schema  
7.3 Precursors and consequences of Aboriginal alcohol misuse in the Kimberley: a hypothetical schema  
8.1 Socioenvironmental characteristics of transition-phase communities: order vs identity  
8.2 Rack's paradigm for the social differentiation of immigrant groups
Tables

1 Specific external causes (excluding suicide) as proportions of Aboriginal non-infant deaths: 1957–1986 83
2 Deaths from external causes as a proportion of all deaths: for Kimberley Aborigines, Western Australian Aborigines and the total Western Australian population 84
3 Cause-specific death rates for deaths from external causes: Kimberley Aborigines, 1982–1986, and total Western Australian population, 1984 85
4 Deaths of Kimberley Aborigines aged 15–30 years, showing cause and record of alcohol involvement, by proportion: 1977–1986 86
5 Proportions of current drinkers and of those consuming at ‘harmful levels’, by sex and identified by study and location 109
6 Median alcohol consumption by ease of access to alcohol 117
7 Deaths outside one Aboriginal residential camp, Broome: 1979–1987 146
9 Comparison of two groups of Aboriginal males aged 20 years or less: from QARK random sample and from suicides 1988–1989 156
10 HSCL-25 anxiety and depression scores for 3 groups from the QARK 170
11 Aboriginal personal violence in the Kimberley: an intercultural/sociohistorical paradigm 175
12 Mean teacher perception scores for Kimberley Aboriginal children, by sex 233
13 Merton’s typology of modes of adaptation: a comparison with Born 239
### Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>HSCL-25 anxiety and depression scores for Kimberley Aborigines, by sex and gambling status</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>A paradigm of development</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preface

Power courses and pulses across remote Australia. Where once symbols were coded in the land to sustain and guide its guardians, they are now obvious to all. Microwave and satellite dishes have supplanted the wind-powered bore as the technological icons of the outback — remote Australia is no longer isolated Australia. The pulsing rhythms of the generator and the crepitation of distant videos keep the night at bay in even the most remote Aboriginal communities. While power remains central to Aboriginal life, both the cultural symbols, and its negotiation and articulation, are changing. The rerouting of the powerlines within and between Aboriginal groups, and between Aborigines and the wider Australian society, has far-reaching consequences. The Aboriginal flag adorns and bedecks garments and buildings as a communication of a prideful identity, a statement and a challenge. However, these transformations have not taken place without casualties and this work examines some of the behavioural outcomes for this group that have emerged over the last three decades, drawing from one region of remote Aboriginal Australia — the Kimberley.

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xv
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