



## **Living the Social Determinants**

Richard Chenhall

(Senior Lecturer in Medical Anthropology, Center for Health and Society, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne, Australia)

The social determinants of health have become a dominant discourse in worldwide government policy formation in improving public health. For Indigenous Australian health, the approaches outlined in federal government policies related to 'closing the gap' are framed within social determinants perspectives, the key focus of which is to reduce social inequalities. Housing, education, community, leadership are all viewed as important areas for intervention, which can in turn be measured and quantified to indicate improved health outcomes. To date, anthropological engagement with the social determinants framework has been minimal, as have been more general critiques of this approach. In this presentation, we offer a critique of this new approach in public health and discuss an anthropological engagement with the social determinants of health. This perspective draws on key aspects of 'identity dynamics', arguing that understanding how people inhabit their bodily and social worlds is vital if we are to improve health through addressing social inequality. We will draw on ethnographic material from South East Arnhem Land which explores how people live, experience and interpret the range of factors that impact on their health and well-being.