



# A Case Report of Pregnancy Loss in a Young Aboriginal Female Off Country

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## Background:

Maternity care and birthing on country are integral to culturally safe care for First Nations people.<sup>1</sup> Pregnancy loss is an unfortunately common event, that First Nations people may experience off country, without the sociocultural and spiritual support of their community.

## Aims:

To identify strategies to support First Nations persons experiencing pregnancy loss off country.

## Case:

KR, a 20-year-old Aboriginal female, was transferred from regional NSW to John Hunter Hospital with a traumatic leg injury, requiring emergency vascular surgery. KR was 8 weeks pregnant on arrival, however suffered a miscarriage shortly after her surgery. This experience was initially burdened by the vast distance between KR, and her family and community.

## Results:

On interviewing KR, the major theme identified was the importance of family support. Accommodation near John Hunter Hospital was organised for KR's family by the Aboriginal Liaison Officers and Social Workers, so they could visit from regional NSW. KR appreciated the space and privacy of a single room whilst suffering pregnancy loss; and this also facilitated ease of visits for KR's many family members. However, as KR was not admitted under Maternity and Gynaecology, she felt that the staff providing immediate care to her during the miscarriage were not confident in managing this, resulting in limited support and explanation during this time. Nonetheless, KR expressed that being cared for by Medical and Allied Health staff who took the time to listen to her experiences, in a respectful and non-judgemental manner, was a very important aspect of her healing.

## Discussion:

KR's case highlights a need for prompt involvement of Maternity care providers for all women experiencing miscarriage, and the importance of facilitating access to a person's support network.<sup>2</sup> Current literature on pregnancy loss in First Nations people, both on and off country, is lacking. Further research is required to provide holistic care to this population.

## References:

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2. Marriott, R., Reibel, T., Coffin, J., Gliddon, J., Griffin, D., Robinson, M., ... & Maddox, J. (2019). "Our culture, how it is to be us"—listening to Aboriginal women about on Country urban birthing. *Women and Birth*, 32(5), 391-403.

