

Overview

Background: In 2012, human papillomavirus (HPV) accounted for 35% of all new cervical cancer diagnosis in Canada. Inuit have some of the highest rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HPV, and at considerable risk for cervical cancer. Unfortunately, there has been limited funding for cervical cancer prevention in Inuit communities. Culturally-relevant approaches to cervical cancer education, prevention and treatment need to acknowledge issues around healthcare delivery (e.g. limited access to routine PAP screening, lack of anonymity and counseling, and racial discrimination) and the historical legacies of colonialism. Additionally, marginalization, residential schooling, and trauma which often result from unresolved sexual violence and childhood abuse, may deter Inuit women seeking testing and other medical care. Ultimately, programming needs to be tailored to the unique cultural, spiritual and community needs of Inuit.

For Inuit in Canada, wellbeing is a central concept of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ), which is synonymous with Inuit culture and philosophy. It is important to include IQ in all aspects of life, including health and wellbeing. Recognizing that mass screening for cervical cancer in Inuit communities is not always a viable option due to limited services, refusal of PAP screening and fear, we feel it is important to foster wellness and integrate IQ in cervical cancer education and prevention activities for Inuit.

Approach: A collaborative, interdisciplinary research team was created to develop a research proposal that will inform the development of cervical cancer education, prevention and treatment tools. These tools will reflect wellbeing as conceptualized through the IQ framework, with emphasis on Canadian Inuit communities.

Activities: This project included three activities with associated objectives:

Activity 1: Three-day Workshop

- Engage with northern researchers and key informants to identify priorities that will inform culturally competent and safe cervical cancer education, prevention and treatment through the IQ framework; and
- Create new and strengthen existing partnerships between Indigenous communities and organizations, academic and community researchers and government organizations to address the issue of cervical cancer in Inuit communities.

Activity 2: Scoping Review

- Undertake a comprehensive scoping review of current northern/Indigenous cervical cancer research and traditional medicine within Canada, including government documents (grey literature) and unpublished works.

Activity 3: Operating Grant Preparation

- Enhance community-based research and proposal writing capacity among team members; and
- Develop a future competitive CBR Operating Grant to be submitted to CIHR’s anticipated competition associated with the Catalyst award.

Activity 1 Outcomes (3-Day Workshop)

In April 2018, members of the research team met in Iqaluit (See Appendix A for list of Participants) representing Community Health Representatives (CHRs), Inuit community members, Inuit organizations, and academic institutions. The meeting supported a comprehensive exchange of information, including: an overview of Pauktuutit’s current activities on sexual health and cancer, the current landscape of HPV and cervical cancer in the North, risk factors for HPV transmission among Inuit communities, a foundational presentation on Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ) principles, information about effective knowledge translation and examples of related research projects on pap smear screening with Indigenous women and the role of IQ in community-based research. By coming together, team members were able to strengthen existing research partnerships, solidify research priorities, familiarize participants with the research process and develop a preliminary plan for the operating grant submission. A range of considerations and recommendations for preparing the operating grant emerged from the discussions throughout the workshop.

Activity 2 Outcomes (Scoping Review)

A scoping review was completed and the protocol for the review has been published (available [here](#) – See Appendix B for Abstract). The review identified/described Indigenous healing strategies in Canada. Fifty-nine articles were included, and findings suggest that a diversity of characteristics – including guiding principles and human resources – are consistent in supporting a decolonizing approach that upholds Indigenous knowledge, respects Indigenous rights to self-determination and recognizes Indigenous resilience and agency.

Activity 3 Outcomes (Grant Development)

Building on recommendations and considerations presented during the workshop, the foundations of an operating grant have been developed; however, the operating grant associated with the Catalyst Grant has not been announced prior to the completion of the Catalyst Grant activities.

Appendix A: Meeting Participants

Name	Position, Organization
Ashlee-Ann Pigford	Research Coordinator, Dalhousie University – Pauktuutit projects
Dr. Audrey Steenbeek	Professor, School of Nursing, Dalhousie University
Dr. Cathy MacDonald	Associate Professor, School of Nursing, St. Francis Xavier University
Diane Sammurtok	Community Health Representative, Arviat, Government of Nunavut
Erin McAfee	Research Coordinator, Dalhousie University
Dr. Janet Curran	Associate Professor, School of Nursing, Dalhousie University
Jenny Rand	PhD Student, Dalhousie University
Dr. Paul Brassard	Associate Professor, Department of Medicine, McGill University
Savanah Ashton	Manager, Health Department, Pauktuutit
Sipporah Enuaraq	Projects Coordinator, Health Department, Pauktuutit
Sophie Keelan	Community Member, Kangiqsualujuaq, Nunavik, Quebec
Tracy O’Hearn	Executive Director, Pauktuutit
Ziwa Yu	Dalhousie University, Masters Student, School of Nursing

Appendix B: Scoping Review Protocol

Yu, Z; Steenbeek, A; Macdonald, M; MacDonald, C; McKibbin, S. 2019. Characteristics of Indigenous healing strategies in Canada a scoping review protocol. *JB I Database of Systematic Reviews and Implementation Reports*. 17(9). p 1933–1940

Objective: The objective of this review is to identify the characteristics of Indigenous healing strategies in Canada and approaches to improving cultural relevance to local Indigenous contexts.

Introduction: In the previous 150 years, Indigenous peoples of Canada have experienced colonization, forced assimilation, cultural oppression and violence, and these are associated with high rates of social distress and health disparities. Today, legacies of colonization continue to marginalize Indigenous peoples, creating healthcare institutions devoid of Indigenous worldviews. Despite the growing number of Indigenous healing strategies currently in existence, literature describing these strategies has not been systematically scoped. To address this gap, this scoping review will identify characteristics of Indigenous healing strategies in Canada, and explore culturally relevant approaches used in research process.

Inclusion criteria: This review will consider literature that describes Indigenous healing strategies in Canada and will include First Nations, Inuit and Métis as the population of interest. Strategies may include, but are not limited to, health services and programs, policies and guidelines, models and frameworks, and Indigenous narratives and expert opinions. Healing strategies delivered in all service settings are eligible for inclusion.

Methods: The databases/sources to be searched will include: CINAHL, Sociological Abstracts, PsycINFO, MEDLINE and Academic Search Premier. Searches for gray literature will be conducted in iPortal, Canadian Electronic Library, and a list of Canadian government and Indigenous organization websites. Retrieval of full-text studies and data extraction will be performed independently by two reviewers. Findings will be summarized in tabular forms accompanied by narrative text.