

Nutrition and Tooth Decay in Children: A Qualitative Study of Indigenous Parental Experiences and Perspectives

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PURPOSE

This research project will investigate Indigenous remote community members' perspective of nutrition and tooth decay in children. This proposal focuses on tooth decay in Indigenous children as many are affected by this disease and because prevention of tooth decay in children could help prevent this disease when they are adults.

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the knowledge, experiences, and perspectives regarding nutrition and tooth decay in community members from remote Indigenous communities.



Indigenous communities, particularly those in rural and remote areas have high rates of dental diseases due to lack of access to dental services and high costs of nutritious foods (Canadian Association of Public Health Dentistry, 2015).

MAIN ACTIVITIES

The research team intends to engage a Community Research Advisory Committees (CRACs) from Cumberland House Cree and Métis Nations for this project. CRACs will guide the entire research process while Community Research Assistants (CRAs) from the partnering community will support this process and receive mentorship from the research team, where appropriate. As CRACs actively direct research design, implementation, and mobilization, overly detailed research methodologies can limit Indigenous engagement and infringe upon self-determination.

This project will use qualitative research methods and will be guided by a community research advisory committee. In previous research we have found that sharing circles (focus groups) and informal, semi-structured interviews have often been the preferred method by Indigenous communities. Currently, we have a relationship with Cumberland House and have been working with them. Two Community Research Assistants (CRAs) were hired from the Cumberland House to support the process and receive mentorship from the team where appropriate. CRAs are visiting the community to form a CRAC and engage with the community to determine needs for the project. Collaborative meetings with CRAC members will result in an equitable sharing of CRAC and researcher expertise.

PREDICTIONS

- We anticipate conducting 3 research circles to interview 6 participants per circle, totaling 18 participants (co-researchers). The number of research circles necessary in this category is subject to change until we have fully assessed program availability in the region.
- Data analysis is to be done by an Indigenous methodology of qualitative data analysis known as Nanâtawihowin Ācimowina Kika-mōsahkinikēhk Papiskīci-itascikēwin Astācikowina (NAKPA), of Cree meaning, "Medicine/Healing/Stories Picked, Sorted, Stored". NAKPA is a data analysis method developed by Morning Star Lodge and is used to analyze qualitative data. It is a data analysis method that may be conducted virtually and is specifically designed as a culturally safe method to include Indigenous community members in the data analysis process, furthering their sovereignty of their data.
- The project will be implemented remotely to respect social distancing restrictions and to avoid the risk of spreading the COVID-19 infection and its variants within the Indigenous communities. The proposed project will instead rely on a Community Research Assistant (CRA) already residing in the community to implement the project's practical elements.



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