

Wellness-Based Indigenous Health Research and Promising Practices

On behalf of the IJIH and FNHA Editorial team members, IJIH Editorial Advisory Board, peer reviewers, and authors, we are pleased to present this collection of papers on research and promising practices in Indigenous wellness-based health. IJIH utilizes the term ‘promising practices’ as inclusive of community, cultural, and regional-based health interventions that have been rigorously evaluated through frameworks that reflect Indigenous and western standards of excellence.

This edition is unique not only as a special thematic issue, but as a partnership between IJIH and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). FNHA delivers services to, and in partnership with First Nations in British Columbia, in a new health governance structure established by BC First Nations leadership. IJIH wishes to express its gratitude to the people at FNHA for this opportunity to collaborate, and extends a very warm thank you for their support of this edition.

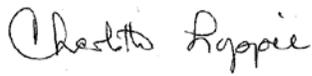
Two important parts of the academic publication process are peer review and Editorial decision-making. In this partnership, the FNHA and IJIH engaged in a collaborative editorial review process to identify papers that would be peer reviewed. This labour intensive process engaged Co-Editors and staff from both organizations. As a model for future editorial partnerships, this process provided an opportunity for both organizations to engage with and learn from one another about their respective mandates and approaches to assessing knowledge about Indigenous health. Editorial team contributions are significant and valued; individuals from both organizations worked together for many hours over the fall and winter of 2015/2016. In particular the dedication of Editorial Assistant Natasha Donovan deserves special mention.

The 2015 IJIH Call for Papers invited community-, student- and university-based authors to submit work that focused on Indigenous community- and cultural-based wellness. This reflects a dramatic shift away from potentially stigmatizing research that documents Indigenous and Aboriginal health deficits and disparities, often in isolation of cultural, social, political and economic contexts. Fortunately, current trends reflect the value of Indigenous community-based research that is grounded in traditional knowledge, holistic paradigms, and an emphasis on health and wellness across the life stages.

This extensive edition of fifteen exceptional papers, presents research and promising practices in the areas of community-based traditional healing and knowledge sharing, the role of Elders in wellness and learning, Indigenous youth leadership, and youth mental health interventions. Jen Bagelman and colleagues examine and share promising practices emerging from a community-based feast project, Coast Salish territory on Vancouver Island, Canada. Lisa Bourque Bearskin and colleagues explore how Indigenous nurses integrate traditional knowledge into their practice as part of an effort to reduce health disparities in their communities. Melany Cueva and colleagues examine the potential of digital storytelling as a health messaging tool through a five-day cancer education and storytelling course for Indigenous Community Health Practitioners in Alaska, USA. Verna Fruch and colleagues conduct participatory action research to facilitate the development and implementation of a community-based palliative care program in Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. Chelsea Gabel and colleagues conduct a community-based participatory research project using photovoice to examine the effects of intergenerational

relationships on health and wellness in one southern Labrador Inuit community. Gwen Healey and colleagues develop a model for youth mental health interventions based on Inuit philosophy and test its application through a camp program in five communities in Nunavut, Canada. Teresa Howell and colleagues examine the role that traditional healing methods play in improving health outcomes in urban Aboriginal communities through a series of health-focused talking circles in Vancouver, Canada. Renée Monchalín and colleagues conduct a thematic analysis of interviews with Indigenous youth leaders to better understand how the concept of leadership is understood within the context of HIV prevention. Renée Monchalín and other colleagues introduce a peer-led pilot health intervention that delivered sexual health promotion and education to Indigenous youth at a pow-wow. Pammla Petrucka and colleagues partner with Elder-youth teams to develop and deliver a healing initiative to students in a Standing Buffalo First Nation elementary school. Sloane Real Bird and colleagues explore a Crow community's perceptions of the link between loss and chronic illness in order to facilitate more effective chronic illness management. Keren Tang and colleagues work with Dene youth to explore culturally-based definitions of physical health through a participatory video project and community discussions. Joshua Tobias and Chantelle Richmond use locally-relevant forms of knowledge translation to discuss strategies for environmental repossession with Elders in two Anishinaabe communities in Ontario, Canada. Alasdair Vance and colleagues propose a framework to promote wellness among Aboriginal patients in urban Australian hospitals that embeds culture into assessment, formulation and treatment. Janice Victor and colleagues work with youth in a Nehiyawin First Nation to co-research wellbeing and encourage the development of self-knowledge and cultural identity using participatory arts methods.

We invite you to enjoy, learn from and share the stories, experiences and lessons shared in this very special thematic issue produced in collaboration, partnership and friendship.



Charlotte Loppie
Editor, IJH



Amanda Ward
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Managing Editor

The International Journal of Indigenous Health (IJIH) is honoured to provide a space for innovative, high quality, Indigenous community-grounded, student and university-based research. This Journal fills a gap in the current landscape of Canadian and international health and research Journals. IJIH is firmly committed to engaging members of Indigenous or Aboriginal communities in creating and determining, via peer review, what is included in this growing body of literature. IJIH (formerly the NAHO Journal of Aboriginal Health) has engaged community-based and university based Indigenous health scholars and practitioners in its unique dual, double-blind peer review process for twelve years. This process ensures a high degree of quality and community relevancy in papers published by the Journal and helps to shape the standards for content, process and interpretation of Indigenous health research.

The IJIH is online, open-access and free. You can support the IJIH by making a donation, signing up to receive updates on the IJIH website, and volunteering as a peer reviewer.