



Service Profile for Indigenous Women Living with HIV in Manitoba: An Environmental Scan



Adina Lakser¹, Laverne Gervais², Marissa Becker¹, Sharon G. Bruce³

¹ Centre for Global Public Health, Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba; ² Ka Ni Kanichihk, Inc., Winnipeg MB; ³Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba

INTRODUCTION

- In Manitoba, approximately 35% of people living with HIV are women, which is significantly greater than the national average of 22%.
- Of the women living with HIV in Manitoba, the majority are Indigenous (First Nation, Metis or Inuit) and report heterosexual contact as primary risk for HIV.
- Central to the current HIV epidemic among Indigenous women are structural drivers, specifically the impact of colonization and violence.

AIM

- The purpose of the overall project is to understand and address the care needs of Manitoba First Nations, Metis and Inuit women living with HIV. The project is part of the National CHIWOSS study.
- The purpose of this component of the research is to describe the “landscape” of services available to Indigenous women living with HIV in Manitoba.

METHODOLOGY

- The research is led by Ka Ni Kanichihk (a community Indigenous organization for women and their families) with allied partners.
- The research is undertaken using decolonizing theory and methods in which:
 - Research priorities are defined by Indigenous research partners, including women living with HIV;

METHODOLOGY (continued)

- Research focuses on strength with a goal of reclaiming Indigenous ways of being and knowing; and
- Research promotes self-determination.

METHODS

Working Group

- A Working Group was formed consisting of Indigenous women living with HIV, an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, and representatives from Ka Ni Kanichihk, Nine Circles Community Health Centre, 595 Prevention Team, Manitoba HIV Program, and the University of Manitoba.

Data Generation

- An environmental scan was completed between May and August, 2016 across Manitoba.
- Interviews were completed by phone or in-person with executive directors or senior management of 12 organizations by AL.
- 10 organizations were located in Winnipeg, and 2 in Northern Manitoba.
- 5 other organizations were contacted but were not available.

Instruments

- We modified the environmental scan instrument from the national CHIWOSS study.
- Questions related to the following broad topics: purpose or focus of organization; services specific to Indigenous women; services specific to people living with HIV; and involvement of service users in directing the operation of the organization.

RESULTS

- All 12 organizations provide services for Indigenous women, some are group specific (e.g., women who use drugs; who are street-involved; sex workers; or are GLBTTQ).
- 4 organizations identified as working towards a “decolonizing” practice.
- 3 organizations provide services specifically for people living with HIV.
- All organizations referred to social determinants of health in the overall purpose or mission of organization.

Types of Services Available

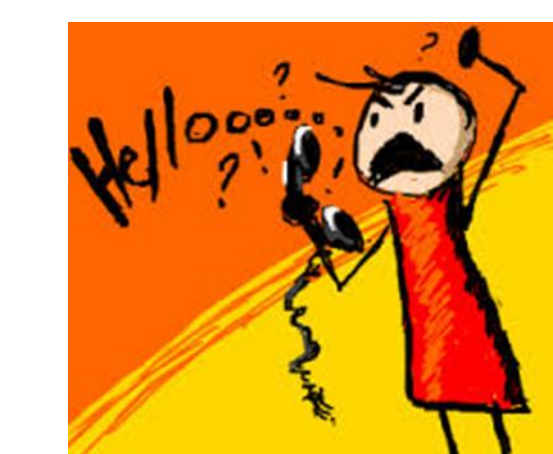
- Primary care, social work, occupational therapy, prenatal care, food bank, group programming, self management tools, housing, outreach, counselling, shelter, peer led groups, cultural programming, access to Elders, crisis and post-crisis services, harm reduction education and tools

Attributes of Decolonizing Organizations

- Goal is to decolonize themselves and their relationships with the community.
- Rooted in peer engagement in the day-to-day operations of the organization.
- Participants are expected to take an active role in service provision.
- Treatment is aimed at reducing harm of disconnection from families and communities that is the legacy of colonization.
- Structure of organizations is purposely less hierarchal, less binary, and more fluid than majority of existing service organizations.

RESULTS (continued)

What is it Like to Access Services?



- Service navigation is challenging:
 - Multiple agencies are involved in the many types of services required by Indigenous women living with HIV;
 - Services are located at multiple sites across the city.
 - Women in rural areas and on reserve may have no or little access to services.

Discussion and Next Steps

- Available services for women living with HIV are Winnipeg-centred. Northern and rural MB have less access.
- *How* services are offered (framework, philosophy) may be as important as *what* services are offered.
- Can organizations adopt some aspects of decolonizing practice?
- System navigation challenges call for supported and guided referral process.
- These data will inform the next phase of data generation on development of services specific to Indigenous women living with HIV.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the project Working Group and those who participated in the environmental scan.

We acknowledge the traditional territories upon which this research is conducted.