SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF INDIGENOUS HEALTH

The National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health

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Overview

- An introduction to the Social Determinants of Indigenous Health
- The work of NCCAH with respect to the Social Determinants of Indigenous Health
- Current context
- Where to from here?
- At the end of the day…
Social Determinants of Health

To consider health from a social determinants perspective requires shifting considerations away from individual subjects (susceptible to factors such as disease or at risk of unhealthy behaviours such as smoking and poor diet) to both the social contexts in which that subject works, plays, loves, and experiences life and to the social factors which impact that subject, including (amongst other things) economics, education, early childhood development, and housing.

(see for instance Anderson et al 2002; Marmot 2005)
Public Health Agency of Canada’s list of Social Determinants of Health

- Aboriginal status
- early life
- education
- employment and working conditions
- food security
- gender
- health care services
- housing
- income and its distribution
- social safety net
- social exclusion
- unemployment and employment security
Unique Social Determinants that Affect Indigenous Health

- Colonization and colonialism
- Racism
- Residential schools
- Self-determination
- Language and culture
- Indigeneity
The Web of Being
April, 2006 – Invited to participate in the WHO Canadian Reference Group (CRG) for the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) that was launched in March of 2005.


January, 2007 – Aboriginal Working Group (AWG) established as part of the CRG.

March, 2007 – Hosted a stakeholders meeting in Ottawa where National Aboriginal Organizations met to discuss the preparation of the papers that would be presented at the WHO Adelaide meeting in April, 2007.
April, 2007 – Canadian First Nations, Inuit and Métis participated in the International Symposium on the Social Determinants of Indigenous Health in Adelaide, Australia. Papers from the AFN, the ITK and the MNC were presented.

June, 2007 – Participated in the WHO Commissioners meeting that took place in Vancouver.

September, 2007 – Participated in the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) planning meeting in New York.

December, 2007 – Participated in the PAHO planning meeting

Inaugural National Forum on Social Determinants of Aboriginal Health

- Explored how the work of sectors like housing, education, research, environment, justice, sport intersect in Aboriginal health and well-being.
- Shared new perspectives and began new relationships as momentum builds nationally and internationally for a SDOH approach to health.
- Discussed healing as holistic and rooted in community, culture, history, spirituality and in strengths.

"Let's talk about...what gives people health, instead of what makes people sick."

Willie Ermine, First Nations University.

- Included youth representatives from across the country who asked: "How can our thoughts collectively change where we're going to be in the future?"
- Produced a documentary of discussions, "Circles of Health: Sharing Our Gifts" distributed widely in Canada, and internationally
October, 2008 – Participated in the PAHO regional meeting in Ecuador. A Background report including elements of Indigenous-specific themes synthesized from the Adelaide Indigenous symposium was presented.

October, 2008 – WHO final report *Closing the Gap in a Generation* was released.
WHO Final Report: *Closing the Gap in a Generation*

- **Over-Arching Recommendations**
  - Improve daily living conditions
  - Tackle the inequitable distribution of power, money and resources
  - Measure and understand the problem and assess the impact of action

- **Indigenous Content**
  - Box 3.1 Unique status of Indigenous Peoples
  - Chandler and Lalonde Research
  - BC Tripartite Agreement
Indigenous Lens within Report

- Uniqueness and diversity of Indigenous Peoples worldwide
- Universality of health inequities among Indigenous populations
- The relationship between health inequities and the relationships between health and power, social participation and empowerment
- The importance of supporting and facilitating the advancement of Indigenous-led initiatives, research, and policy and decision making with respect to advancing cultural continuity among the world’s Indigenous populations
- Importance of traditional knowledge and traditional healers
- Support of recommendations by other international entities
February, 2009 – Hosted *From Visions to Actions: Social Determinants of Aboriginal Health Forum II*

February, 2009 – Participated in the WHO *Call to Action* meeting in London.

March, 2009 – Presented at the Roundtable on Aboriginal SDOH that took place in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
From Visions to Actions: Social Determinants of Aboriginal Health Forum II

National sectors reconvened in Vancouver in 2009 to:

- Identify tools that support cross-connections among sectors
- Share concrete examples of what a holistic, comprehensive approach to health might look like

Speakers and participants:

- Highlighted links between health and social determinants, e.g. housing and TB among Inuit, housing and health among urban Aboriginal peoples
- Emphasized the need for structural change and strategic alliances
- Explored models for change such as the BC Transformative Change Accord which enhances First Nations control of health through new governance structures
... From Visions to Actions: Social Determinants of Aboriginal Health Forum II

- Introduced tools for change such as Health Impact Assessments (HIAs), a process that allows vulnerable populations to participate in developments that affect their lives.

- Emphasized inclusion of First Nations, Inuit and Métis perspectives in cross-sectoral alliances, guided by respect for geographic, cultural and historical differences.

- Supported youth as leaders of major initiatives, for instance in violence prevention and improved access to sport and recreation (BC's Youth Declaration)

- Shared ideas for next steps: holding regional workshops, developing a national strategy on SDOH, hosting another national gathering.

"You are each committed to a different path but are all here for a common purpose. You are all healers..."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip
Current Context

- Formal apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools - June 11, 2008
- Senate Subcommittee on Population Health’s Final report “A Healthy, Productive Canada: A Determinant of Health Approach” - published June, 2009
Conduct regional meetings on Social Determinants of Aboriginal Health scheduled to take place with First Nations, Inuit and Métis groups across Canada.

Planning a third national forum:
Social Determinants of Aboriginal Health: A Call to Action
At the end of the day…

“First Nations, Inuit and Métis – be involved in the design, development and delivery of federal programs and services that address health determinants in their respective communities.”

“We need to go to the bankers, the union halls, to the schools, and workplaces and talk about population health. When people start to understand that everyone is in the health profession, we will make progress”

“Social determinants require social remedies and those social remedies have to come in the form of policy”
“If you heal a child, you will heal a family. If you heal a family, you will heal a community. And if you heal a community, you will heal a Nation.”

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