

## **WHOLISTIC CONVERSATIONS ON THE LIVER AND HEPATITIS C: A VISUAL INDIGENOUS WELLNESS PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Background:**

Hepatitis C disproportionately impacts Indigenous communities within Canada where many do not complete screening or treatment partly due to being unaware of the risks or long-term impacts. Stigma, shame, fear and misinformation often accompany hepatitis conversation, leading to persistent requests from Indigenous community members for relevant awareness resources.

### **Methods:**

The Indigenous researcher incorporated traditional protocol and conducted conversational interviews focusing on respect, relevance, responsibility, reciprocity and relationality while listening to story and traditional perspectives on liver wellness shared by eight Indigenous Knowledge Keepers in Alberta, Canada. Transcript analysis was shaped by frequent feedback loops with participant-partners collaborating to shape the script for a DocuStory film.

### **Results:**

These wholistic conversations revealed a focus on a story of wellness that includes a balance in mental, spiritual, emotional and physical health. Combining the oral tradition of storytelling with modern audio-visual media accompanied by land-based visuals creates a culturally connected health awareness resource that Indigenous community members, young and old, identify with which motivates increased engagement in screening, follow-up care and cure for hepatitis C.

### **Conclusion:**

This 20-minute DocuStory film demonstrates an innovative health promotion approach relevant to a wide range of health-related topics incorporating community member engagement in a format practical for use in schools, harm-reduction, diagnostic screening events, and routine health programming. Sharing wholistic wellness perspectives from Knowledge Holders, social influencers and young people with hepatitis C lived experience, results in increasing awareness and maintaining the interest of audiences of all ages. Due to rising rates, pandemic impact on community, and disparity in awareness and screening for hepatitis C, this wholistic wellness-based resource brings community members together in traditional ways to learn and share knowledge.

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