The Role of Social Determinants of Health on TB among Inuit in Canada

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Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
Inuit Population

- Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Inuit, First Nations and Métis
  - **59,445** Inuit in Canada
  - Population increase of **26%** from 1996 - 2006
  - Median age of **23**
Inuit Homeland

- In Canada, the majority of Inuit live in Inuit Nunangat
- **53** Inuit communities
- **Four** Inuit Land Claim Regions
  - Inuvialuit
  - Nunavut
  - Nunavik
  - Nunatsiavut
Inuit Communities

- Inuit communities are remote
- Can only be reached by air and sea
- Strong culture and language
- Foundational connection to the land
- Strong family and social networks
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)

- Established in 1971 as Inuit Tapirisat of Canada
- Has played an active role in settling the four Inuit land claims
  - James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement
  - Inuvialuit Final Agreement
  - Nunavut Land Claims Agreement
  - Nunatsiavut Land Claim Agreement
ITK Today

- In 2001 became Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
- National representational organization for Inuit in Canada
- Directed by all Canadian Inuit
- Represent and promote the interests of Inuit on a wide variety of environmental, social, cultural, and political challenges
State of TB in Inuit Nunangat

• The incidence rate varies among Inuit regions

• Estimates based on 2001, 2006 and 2011 Census

• Data includes all ethnicities

• Further analysis and research is needed
TB Incidence Rates

Incidence rate of TB disease by Aboriginal group compared with Canadian-born non-Aboriginals, 2001 – 2011*
TB Incidence Rates

Incidence Rates of TB Disease Among Inuit Regions, 2001-2011
Context TB in Inuit Nunangat

• TB incidence rate reflects unique circumstances for Inuit

• High rates impacted by:
  • Post-colonization TB epidemics
  • Early efforts to control TB disease
  • Acculturation
  • Social determinants of health (SDOH)
Social Determinants of Inuit Health

- Inuit social determinants of health are:
  - Quality of early childhood development
  - Culture and language
  - Livelihoods
  - Income distribution
  - Housing
  - Personal safety and security
  - Education
  - Food security
  - Availability of health services
  - Mental wellness
  - Environment
Housing

• Housing Crisis in Inuit Nunangat:
  • Housing shortage
  • Crowded homes
  • Homes in need of major repairs
  • Poor ventilation

• These challenges facilitate the transmission of TB bacteria

Inuit are 8 X more likely than non-Aboriginal Canadians to live in Crowded homes
Housing
The Challenge of Overcrowding

Canada

Inuit Nunangat

340%

Represents 1% of households
Represents 1% of overcrowded households
Food Security

• When all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life

• High levels of food insecurity throughout the regions
  
  o Barriers to harvesting and consuming country foods
  o High cost, quality and availability of store-bought food

70%

Of Inuit preschoolers in Nunavut reside in food insecure households
# Food Security

## The Cost of Eating

### Southern City (Ottawa)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>$3.66</td>
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<td>Nutri-Grain</td>
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<td>Cranberry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boost</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pork</td>
<td>$16.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$28.54</strong></td>
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### Northern Remote Inuit Community

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<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutri-Grain</td>
<td>$23.49</td>
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Availability of Health Services

- Access to culturally appropriate, high quality health services
  - Need to leave communities for medical care
  - Inuit values, approaches, and perspectives
  - High turnover/shortages of health care professionals
  - Low rate of health care professionals in communities

Of Inuit adults had contact with a medical doctor in the previous year compared to 79% of the total adult Canadian population.
Availability of Health Services
A Patient’s Journey

**Ottawa**
- 0h 14 min
- Distance: 6 km
- 0 flights
- 0 stops
- 0 overnights

**Iqaluit**
- 0h 4 min
- Distance: 1 km
- 0 flights
- 0 stops
- 0 overnights

**Paulatuk**
- 29h 0 min
- Distance: 1,869 km
- 2 flights
- 4 stops
- 1 overnight

**Grise Fiord**
- 29h 22 min
- Distance: 3,481 km
- 3 flights
- 4 stops
- 1 overnight
Mental Wellness

• Physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellness as well as strong cultural identity
  o Legacy of relocation and residential schools
  o Socio-economic conditions and lack of employment opportunities
  o Lack of access to continuum of culturally relevant mental wellness, medical and social services

• Influences choices about health and wellness

Rates of Inuit youth suicide are 11X The Canadian national average
A Way Forward

Inuit-Specific TB Strategy

• Collaboration

• Purpose is to:
  • Create awareness for more effective approaches to TB prevention, control and care
  • Provide a path forward to reduce incidence rates of TB

• Innovative Solutions
Social Determinants of Inuit Health

- ITK and the Inuit Public Health Task Group developed a discussion paper on the *Social Determinants of Inuit Health*

- An Inuit-specific resource designed to:
  - Support public health activities across Inuit regions
  - Function as a reference for organizations and stakeholders
  - Provide a position on the determinants affecting the health of Inuit
Key Messages To Take Home

• Work with us!
  – Inuit involvement, respect, commitment to health equity, transparency, accountability and collaboration.

• Innovative solutions

• Address the root causes – Social Determinants of Health

• Inuit-specific approaches

• Sustainable investment

• Collaboration – We need to work together
Nakurmiik! Thank you!

Anna Claire Ryan
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)