The Fireweed Project: Indigenous Peoples and the Right to Abortion

ABOUT THE PROJECT [8, 10]

As a result of colonialism in Canada, Indigenous Peoples often face unique and perpetual barriers when accessing reproductive health services. Some barriers include access to information, cost, geography, and violent colonial practices such as forced sterilization and/or abortion, coercion of contraceptives, and racism from service providers.

The goal of the Fireweed project is to advance knowledge around and remove barriers to abortion services for Indigenous Women, Two-Spirit, and LGBTQIA+ People by asking "what shapes Indigenous experiences of accessing abortion care in Canada"?

METHODS [4, 8]

This project involves Indigenous-led and community-partnered exploratory qualitative studies. Data has been collected through trauma-informed conversational interviews, with open-ended questions. The Six-Stage DEPICT Model (Flicker & Nixon) was used for data analysis.

RESULTS/DISCUSSION [8]

Six themes regarding barriers to safe abortion access emerged from the interviews: poor treatment, stigma, logistical barriers, (lack of integration regarding) traditional knowledge, impacts of colonialism on attitudes toward abortion, and follow-up care/support

CONCLUSIONS [8]

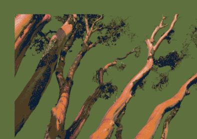
Unique barriers faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada were highlighted. Participants emphasized the importance of reclaiming traditional reproductive knowledge and the need for culturally safer support, particularly in rural and remote areas. The research highlights the importance of centring Indigenous voices to improve abortion care and calls for further exploration of the intersections between abortion access, geography, and Indigenous identity.

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND TRADITIONAL MEDICINES

The first half of my contribution involved researching traditional plant medicines used for contraception and abortion, then translating their names from settler languages back into Indigenous languages. These translated names will serve as pseudonyms for Indigenous participants in a future paper.

GWAGWA̱LTAMA (KWAḰWALA) [3]
OZHAASHIJIIBIK (OJIBWEMOWIN) [6]
ᐃᐦᑲᐸᐢᑲᐧ (CREE) [9]
FIREWEED (ENGLISH)

ḰEḰEIŁĆ (SENĆOŦEN) [1]
QʷƏQʷƏYÍŁČ (XʷSÉPSƏM LƏḰʷÁŊƏN) [2]
ARBUTUS (ENGLISH)



GOZIGWAAKOMIN (ANISHINAABEMOWIN) [11]
LII PWAYR (MICHIF) [7]
SASKATOON BERRY (ENGLISH)

"Oral histories and archives reveal that contraceptives and abortifacients were used within Indigenous communities and administered by caregivers who were also kin, especially grandmothers, aunties, and two-spirit community members." [8]

REFERENCES

KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

The second half of my contribution involved translating knowledge from The Fireweed Project's current and future publications into concise, digestible social media posts for their Instagram account.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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