

INUIT MEN TALKING ABOUT HEALTH



National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO)
 Organisation nationale de la santé autochtone (ONSA)
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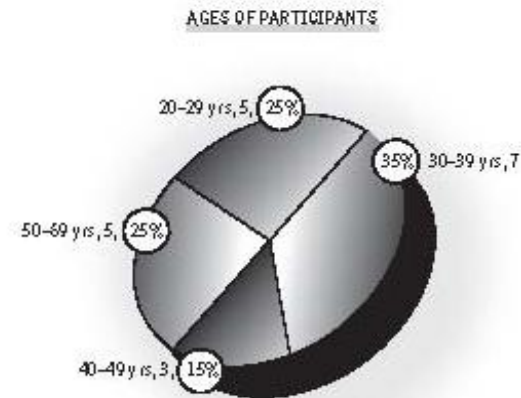
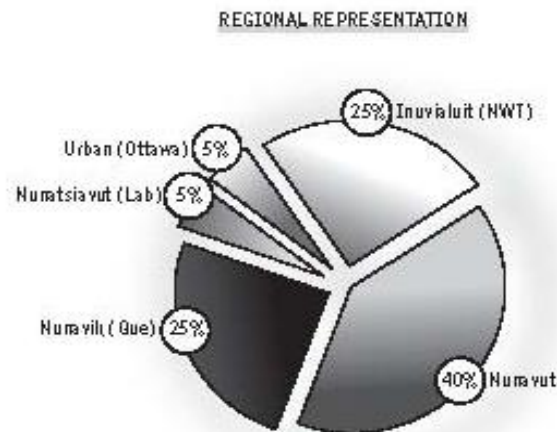
Introduction

- In 2002 Inuit Tuttarvingat of the National Aboriginal Health Organization held community workshops in all four Inuit regions in Canada to gather information on health and health-related needs.
- All workshops showed that men's needs required more attention.



How we did the Research

In 2007 a male staff member from the Inuit Tuttarvingat visited four communities to conduct face-to-face interviews with Inuit men, and also used telephone interviews for a total of 20 respondents.



The interviews focused on five areas:

- Education
- Employment
- Physical activity
- Use of health services
- Personal and family problems



Education

WAS SCHOOL A GOOD EXPERIENCE?

	NUMBER	PER CENT
Good	15	79%
Not good	3	16%
Did not attend school	1	5%
Total response	19	100%

COMPLETED SECONDARY SCHOOL

	NUMBER	PER CENT
Yes	5	26%
No	11	58%
Still attending	3	16%
Total respondents	19	100%

ADDITIONAL COURSES, PROGRAMS, OR TRAINING

	NUMBER	PER CENT
Yes	13	81%
No	3	19%
Total response**	16	100%

** A few respondents did not answer this question.

According to Inuit men, to be able to function in today's society suggestions were made to:

- include both traditional and western materials in the education system;
- make it more of a challenging educational experience which might enlighten Inuit youth to stay motivated in school.



Employment

- Participants commented that it is important to have a job as it gives men a sense of identity and helps with self-esteem.
- Although it is a transition that has been hard, they now have to depend on wages to provide for their families which makes the men feel productive and useful in some way.



Physical activity

- Some sports that the Inuit men play are floor/ice hockey, basketball, softball, karate, walking, swimming, hiking, working out and outdoor activities such as snowmobiling, hunting or working in the shed
- Some suggestions to improve physical activities were:
 - men being able to have access to hunting equipment
 - holding more community activities, social events and tournaments
 - emphasize the importance of promotion of physical activities through teaching and advertisements



Use of health care

COMFORTABLE WITH MEDICAL VISIT

	NUMBER	PER CENT
Comfortable	14	73%
Awkward	5	27%
Total respondents	19	100%

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION WHEN SICK

	NUMBER	PER CENT
Yes	9	47%
No	10	53%
Total Respondents	19	100%

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION WHEN THEY MIGHT BE SICK

	NUMBER	PER CENT
Yes	5	26%
Sometimes	1	6%
No	13	68%
Total Respondents	19	100%

- Men would consult with a doctor for chronic issues such as heart, back, bones, joints and migraine headaches, other minor issues were toothaches, infected cuts, abdominal problems, hearing problems and flu/cold symptoms.
- Participants felt that more health promotion issues such as heart/cardiovascular problems, cancer, diabetes, emphysema, addictions, hearing problems and effects of smoking needed more attention.
- Men tend to show more interest in health promotion through television, radio, pamphlets, posters and the Internet.



Personal and family problems

EXPERIENCE OF PERSONAL PROBLEMS

PROBLEM	NUMBER	PER CENT*
Jealousy	9	47%
Anger	6	32%
Unemployment	5	26%
Alcoholism	4	21%
Lack of communication	3	16%
Stress	2	11%
Loss of identity	2	11%
Other issues	1	5%

COMMUNITY HELP FOR ADDICTIONS

	NUMBER	PER CENT*
Alcoholics Anonymous	8	42%
Rehab centre	6	32%
Church groups	4	21%
Social services	4	21%
Counselling	3	16%
Men's group/program	2	11%
RCMP/ by-law	2	11%
Health centre / hospital	2	11%
Alcohol education committee	1	5%
Women's group home	1	5%
Crisis line	1	5%
Don't know any sources	1	5%

* Respondents could name more than one source of help.

- The study showed that jealousy and alcoholism attributed to underlying issues
- The lack of anger management programs was a common issue in their personal lives
- Seeking help within the community was a challenge for the participants as privacy and the unfamiliarity of the counsellor but admitted they would turn to a professional for help
- Men would seek help for situations such as loss of a friend/family, feelings of being overwhelmed, unemployment, physical problems and communication problems

Conclusions

- Inuit men explained that education is an important role in their lives as with an education you are able to seek employment, which will lead to a sense of pride and a sense of belonging.
- Men felt that there is a lack of health promotion. And that more emphasis needs to be put into men's health issues.
- Men showed the need for stronger issues/support that need to be dealt with such as anger management, substance abuse, communication and family life -- if it is available in the community.



Conclusions cont'd

- Throughout this research project, men emphasized the problems they face are due to the loss of culture and feeling of uncertainty about their role within their families and communities.
- Men felt that there is a strong urge for feeling of identity, of belonging, and of pride in their Inuit culture and heritage.



For more information

"HOW ARE WE AS MEN? - Angutiilli qanuiliqpat?"

2 hour call-in TV show and Web resources:

www.naho.ca/inuit/wellnessTV/men.php

Web site:

www.naho.ca/inuit

E-mail:

inuit@naho.ca

Toll-free telephone:

1-877-602-4445

