

Access to nutritious food and potable water within Indigenous communities in Newfoundland and Labrador

H. Jenkins¹, M. Park², L. Blundell³, L. Dooley⁴. L. Eastern Health, NL^{1,2}

Introduction: The purpose of this study is to support the culture and beliefs of Indigenous individuals, by exploring the access to culturally acceptable food and safe drinking water for Indigenous communities and providing a bridge to accessibility within this population. Conducting a literature review will explore any gaps in the access to nutritious food and potable water in Indigenous communities within Newfoundland and Labrador (NL).

Objectives: The objectives of this research is to gain knowledge of the access to nutritious food and potable water in Indigenous communities within NL and provide recommendations on how to address and fill these gaps.

Methods: A literature review will assess the integrity, transparency and validity of the content. The literature that will be analyzed in terms of its relevance and effectiveness of the current access to nutritious food and potable water in Indigenous communities include both academic and government documents, as well as grey literature. We anticipate that the review of literature will reveal that there are gaps in the accessibility to nutritious food and water available for Indigenous communities in NL.

Results: Many barriers were identified throughout the literature review including limitations in programs/initiatives, limited opportunities for Indigenous voices to be represented, and minimal focus on potable water access. We also found that Indigenous populations are more vulnerable to adverse health conditions, that Indigenous people in rural areas have a greater difficulty accessing nutritious food and potable water, and there are limited resources available to provide nutritious food and potable water to these populations.

Conclusions: This research allowed us to identify potential ways to overcome barriers to accessing nutritious food and potable water. These include community involvement with developing programs and initiatives, further research in terms of potable water and the importance of traditional food access, as well as a dietitian's role in advocacy and action for change.

Significance: This research has significance in the field of dietetics by identifying and establishing diversity in the access to nutritious food and potable water for Indigenous communities in NL. Dietitians play a significant role in identifying, supporting and filling current and future gaps in nutrition accessibility in both hospitals and communities. These professionals will also be able to identify and advocate for the adaptation and development of nutritional services that will aim to have a sustainable impact on the accessibility to both nutritious food and potable water for these populations.