

ABSTRACT

POSTER TITLE: Prenatal Opioid Exposure and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome: A Research Project with Indigenous Peoples in Ontario First Nations

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ABSTRACT

Prenatal opioid exposure has risen substantially over the past two decades and can have lasting health impacts for infants and children, including potential long-term neurodevelopmental impairments. Neonatal abstinence syndrome is a withdrawal syndrome observed in the babies of mothers who are either using opioids or being treated for opioid dependence. There was a 15-fold increase in the incidence rate of neonatal abstinence syndrome from 1992-2011 in Ontario.

Our project team was formed in 2017 in response to First Nations concerns about the impact of prenatal opioid exposure on the health of children in their communities. Our team includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous health care providers, leaders, and researchers. The project goals are to: a) build strong relationships with First Nation communities; and b) gather and share community- and culturally-specific information about prenatal opioid exposure.

Using mixed-methods, this project is providing 13 First Nation communities with incidence rates and trends for prenatal opioid exposure and neonatal abstinence syndrome that are community specific. This project is also working with communities to gather meaningful qualitative data through focus groups and individual interviews. The questions that frame the qualitative research are: 1) What is the impact of prenatal opioid exposure on First Nation communities? 2) What strengths can be built on and what strategies could help address prenatal opioid exposure? 3) What strengths can be built on, and what strategies could help maximize the potential of children who have neurodevelopmental impairments due to prenatal opioid exposure? To date, we have completed 50 individual interviews and focus groups.

This presentation (poster) will focus on our process of collaboration, our engagement strategies, how we value and integrate Indigenous and Western knowledge, how the principles of OCAP® (First Nations ownership, control, access, and possession of data) are embedded in our project, future plans for data collection and knowledge mobilization, along with lessons learned.