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Inuit Tuttarvingat



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



The Project

Title:

Health and Housing Realities for Inuit – series

Rationale:

“Housing is not the only issue, but all issues relate to housing”



Project Development Process

- Housing **workshop** in March 2008
- Workshop resulted in **recommendation** to prepare a national profile of Inuit housing for Inuit organizations
- Participants willing to function as **working group**
- Working group **advises** on project process and acts as review committee for products.



Key Objectives

- Consider a contextual and long-term view as the main approach for analysis
- Provide documentation of Inuit housing realities for use by Inuit organizations and governments
- Help territorial/provincial/national government officials understand the issues
- Provide information on concepts and evidence linking housing quality with diseases and health status
- Provide statistics concerning Inuit housing
- Communicate effectively key factors of Inuit housing (realities, needs)



Project Design

Developed a **two-year project** to accommodate the recommendations received from working group

Four **research papers** and bibliography

- Housing and Inuit Health, annotated bibliography
- Housing as a Determinant of Inuit Health
- Homelessness and Shelters
- A National Profile of Inuit Housing
- History of Inuit Housing and Communities

A **national workshop** on Inuit housing

Continuous networking with the **working group**



Realities for Inuit

- Cold climate
- Crowded homes
- Housing shortage
- Aging dwellings requiring repair
- Long waits for social housing
- Homelessness is hidden
- Poverty
- Travel to access medical services



Realities for Inuit

- Realities: Limited availability of housing for Elders, few shelters and transition houses
- Realities: key characteristic of homelessness in Inuit regions is that it is **hidden**. Homelessness is hidden because Inuit cultural values are making sure that those who have houses will share them with those who have no house
- Realities: Where to go? Need to leave community, major disruption of day-to-day life



Linking Housing and Health

Overall, the literature identifies three primary aspects of linking poor housing and poor health outcomes:

- (1) overcrowding, dampness and moulds**
- (2) sanitation**
- (3) basic housing quality**



Linking Housing and Health

Research providing evidence:

Example on Crowding - study by Tester 2006 found health problems associated: colds, coughs, influenza, cramped muscles, cold sores, tuberculosis, skin problems, lack of sleep, anger, depression

Example: Research study to explore the relation between environmental indoor air quality and lower respiratory tract infection in Inuit children (Kovesi, *CMAJ* 2007;177:155-60)

It is unclear whether crowded housing and inadequate ventilation are risk markers (reflecting association) or risk factors (reflecting causation) for respiratory tract infection in children (Orr, *CMAJ*)



Shelter Review

A Total of 25 shelters identified

7 in Nunavut

2 Inuvialuit region

4 Nunavik

2 Nunatsiavut

11 in Gateway communities
outside of Inuit Nunangat

Most funded via
provincial/territorial
programs and donations

3 receive direct federal
funding



Next Step

A National Profile of Inuit Housing

- partnership with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Census data, time points, demographics
(Collecting available Census, APS, ACS data)
- Information from Inuit regional organizations
(for example, waiting lists)



Research to Provide Evidence

- Treating factors influencing health status as competing or in hierarchies may prevents us from delivering contextual analysis, for example, studies concluding that socio-economic status has a stronger link to health than housing has to health - what does this mean in the context of existing realities for Inuit?
- Housing and education: Starting from current situation of crowded homes, how will we research options for improving educational attainment?



Housing of Tomorrow

Inuit children under 6 years living in

- crowded dwellings - 49% Inuit Nunangat (highest in Nunavik with 59%)
- dwelling requiring major repairs: 29% Inuit Nunaat; (highest in Nunavik with 45% Nunavik)

(2006 Aboriginal Childrens Survey, Statistics Canada)

“Housing is not the only issue, but all issues relate to housing”



