

Brain Injury from an Aboriginal Perspective: Traditional Teachings from Elders

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Overview

- Background
- Objectives
- Methods
 - Participants
- Themes
- Future Research



Background

- Disproportionately high rates of morbidity and mortality (Frohlich, Ross, & Richmond, 2006)
- Are needs being met? (Karmali et al., 2005)
- Inadequate services (Assembly of First Nations, 2005)
- Beliefs influence access to services (Kendall & Marshall, 2004)
- Culturally competent care (Carlock, 2006)
- Brain injury in Treaty 3

Objectives

- To gain an understanding from Aboriginal Elders in Treaty 3 of:
 - Traditional teachings and perspectives about the etiology and healing of brain injury
 - How traditional teachings and healing methods can inform culturally competent rehabilitation practices

Methods

- Ethics - University of Toronto REB
- Participatory Action Research (PAR)
- Purposive sampling and culturally-appropriate recruitment
- Focus group
- Framework Analysis
- Member checking

Participants

Gender	First Language	Approx. Age	Role
Male	Ojibway	50-60	Traditional Healer
Male	Ojibway	60-70	Cultural Coordinator
Female	Ojibway	60-70	Elder/Traditional Teacher
Male	English	30-40	Mental Health Case Manager
Female	Ojibway	50-60	Traditional Healer
Male	Ojibway	50-60	Traditional Healer
Female	Ojibway	60-70	Elder/Traditional Teacher
Male	Ojibway	50-60	Mental Health Case Worker
Male	Ojibway	50-60	Mental Health Case Worker
Male	Unknown	Unknown	Helper to Traditional Healer

Themes

- Pervasiveness of Spirituality
- “Fixing” illness or injury vs. Living with Wellness
- Working together in treating brain injury
- Financial Support needed for Traditional healing

Pervasiveness of Spirituality

Codes within Theme: 13

Participant	# of References
1	15
2	10
3	-
4	4
5	27
6	5
7	-
8	-
9	2
10	-
TOTAL	63

Pervasiveness of Spirituality

“...we need to be spiritually ... connected with who we are...”

– Traditional Healer

“I guess it all depends how we're gifted, because all of us are gifted in different ways...”

- Traditional Healer

"Fixing" illness or injury vs. Living with Wellness

Codes within Theme: 21

Participant	# of References
1	23
2	16
3	-
4	7
5	15
6	1
7	1
8	-
9	12
10	-
TOTAL	75

"Fixing" illness or injury vs. Living with Wellness

"our life is so precious we have to look after it every day"
- Traditional Healer

"they too have to work. It's not like ... I give them medicine, "come back and see me in two weeks, see how it works", you know, ... It's "here's your help, ... here's what going to help you, and here's what you need to do for yourself... it's up to you... I told you it's up to you to work on it. You take your medicines ... you go for your walks, you go for you meditations, you go for your sweat lodges..."
-Traditional Healer

Working together in treating brain injury

Codes within Theme: 16

Participant	# of References
1	4
2	26
3	1
4	-
5	19
6	8
7	1
8	-
9	26
10	-
TOTAL	85

Working together in treating brain injury

"you have to make our people aware ... what causes that ... how do we develop brain damage"

- Cultural Coordinator

"to me when somebody's into that machine, it's not up to me, you know. If a doctor tells me, "it's up to you", I'd have to go ask first because that spirit that once lived in that body might have already left."

- Traditional Healer

Financial Support needed for Traditional healing

Codes within Theme: 19

Participant	# of References
1	24
2	39
3	29
4	3
5	4
6	-
7	-
8	-
9	1
10	3
TOTAL	103

Financial Support needed for Traditional healing

“we have to pay ... we have to give gifts to
... this person that does the healing...”

- Elder/Traditional Teacher

“I’m here to show you actually ... what it’s
all about, if you want to, if you want to
know it, if you want to experience it. How
can you experience it by reading?”

- Traditional Healer

Future Research

- Brain Injury
- Physical Health
- Mental Health

Acknowledgements

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A wide-angle photograph of a vast, deep blue ocean under a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The sun is visible on the left side, creating a shimmering reflection on the water's surface. The horizon line is clearly visible in the distance.

Questions?