



Mino-Bimaadiziwin: A Theory of Anishinaabek Health

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ABSTRACT:

Amongst the Anishinaabek and other Algonquian-speaking Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the United States, no word directly translates as 'health' and *mino-bimaadiziwin*, meaning "living the good life" is the most often cited closest phrase. The literature on *mino-bimaadiziwin* is limited, and there are only a few accounts that explore the meaning of this term in the context of Indigenous health. *Mino-bimaadiziwin* is either referenced in passing reference as meaning holistic health or as an expression of culture, spirituality and health. In this presentation, I examine historical and contemporary anthropological ethnographic studies, Indigenous knowledge and scholarly literature and linguistic references to explore this concept in greater detail as it relates to health. Findings suggest that historically, *mino-bimaadiziwin* is reflective of a comprehensive Anishinaabek worldview and ontology expressing the place of the Anishinaabek with spirit and human beings. *Mino-bimaadiziwin* is a time immemorial explanatory model of Indigenous health. With the onset of colonialism, the meaning of *mino-bimaadiziwin* has shifted to include relationships with settler society. In effect, this concept of health focusses on relationships and conduct in life and disharmony can result in poor health outcomes and even death. Based on these findings, I suggest *mino-bimaadiziwin* is a theoretical, conceptual model of Indigenous health that, in effect, functions akin to an Indigenous determinant of health.