



**Aaniish Naa Gegii: Does screening support successful early intervention among First Nations children and youth?**

**PRESENTING AUTHOR:**

Nancy L Young PhD<sup>1</sup>

**AUTHOR(S):**

Mary Jo Wabano BA MHK<sup>2</sup>; Marnie Anderson BPHE<sup>1</sup>; Diane Jacko BA<sup>2</sup>

**AFFILIATIONS:**

1 Laurentian University

2 NAANDWECHIGE-GAMIG Wikwemikong Health Centre

**ABSTRACT:**

Background:

There is a strong drive to focus on early intervention in First Nations communities. The Aaniish Naa Gegii is a children's health and well-being measure ([www.ACHWM.ca](http://www.ACHWM.ca)) that offers the opportunity to the need for support among Indigenous children and youth.

This research project was designed to answer two questions:

- Does the Aaniish Naa Gegii identify needs earlier in the children's journey?
- Does the Aaniish Naa Gegii lead to improved outcomes one year later?

Methods:

Children 8 to 18 years of age were recruited from one First Nation and completed the Aaniish Naa Gegii in schools, the local youth centre, at community events in Wiikwemkoong, and in the mental health clinic. All children met with a mental health worker immediately after completing the measure who assigned the participants to three groups based on their professional judgement: healthy peers, newly identified needs, or typical treatment groups. The data were analysed to determine if children identified as at-risk through screening (newly identified) had higher (healthier) scores than children who accessed local mental health services through the typical referral process and to compare changes in health over the following year.

A total of 227 children were recruited. From these, 133 formed the Healthy Peers (HP) group, 35 children formed the Newly Identified Needs (NIN) group and 58 were enrolled in the Typical Treatment (TT) group. No differences were found in Emotional Quadrant (EQ) scores between the NIN and TT groups, however, both groups were significantly different from the HP group ( $p < 0.05$ ). The NIN and TT groups both showed significant improvement over time ( $p < 0.05$ ). Those in the NIN group needed significantly less support to achieve improvements.

The measure was unable to identify children's needs at healthier stage compared to the standard referral process, but were able to recover with less support.