HEALTH CARE EXPERIENCES

OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN CANADA

Question

How are social determinants of health embodied and enacted during clinical encounters of Indigenous people living with type 2 diabetes in Canada?

This study is part of "Educating for Equity," an international collaboration involving Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Background

Indigenous populations:

- Acquire diabetes and its complications at younger ages and have poorer treatment outcomes
- Have rates of type 2 diabetes 3–5 times higher than non-Indigenous populations

Social determinants that contribute to increased rates of disease and health equity gaps:

- Impacts of colonization
- Social exclusion
- Political marginalization
- Historical trauma

Study

- 12 men and 20 women from 5 Indigenous communities in Canada
- Sequential focus groups
- Researchers used a phenomenological thematic analysis framework to categorize diabetes experiences

Results

Experiences with diabetes care categorized into 4 themes

"

I think the doctors do have to be educated on what happened, and also to realize that it's intergenerational.

"

Historical trauma Colonial legacy of health care

Physician power Mistrust

Perpetuation of inequities

Denied care

Using fear tactics
Inferior care

Little respect for cultural practices

Chack of continuity in care funding

Physician shortage Rushed appointments

Structural barriers to care Lack of on-

reserve

services

Geographic barriers isolation

Physician humility
Positive health care relationships mitigate harm
Physician patient collaboration

Some places you do get treated poorly because of our skin colour. That makes me so mad, I feel like taking a knife and saying 'look, isn't my blood the same colour?'

"

Interpretation

- Patients' experiences with diabetes care were influenced by historical experiences and contemporary exposures to culturally unsafe health care.
- 2. Experiences led to **nondisclosure** with health care providers, **mistrust, medication avoidance, advice not followed**.
- 3. Relationship-centred approach to care has role in mitigating past harms (e.g. involve family, build trust, interest in Indigenous culture). Empathy, humility and patience are key physician characteristics.
- are key physician characteristics.
 Opportunities to improve: enhanced patient-centred care approaches and cultural safety training for health care providers.

