

INTRODUCTION

Indigenous populations in the north are experiencing a socio-cultural shift from a nomadic, hunter gatherer lifestyle to a more western sedentary way of living. This change in lifestyle has lead to higher cancer rates among Indigenous populations in northern Canada. Indigenous populations experience a lower life expectancy, as much as 12 years shorter than the national average. A significantly lower life expectancy and higher prevalence of cancer (see Figure 1) has raised concern on how and what can be done to combat these findings. Cancer screening is becoming an effective method to prevent cancer progression and lower cancer mortality rates. The three main types of cancer screening services (mammogram, FIT, pap smear tests) are effective at detecting breast, colorectal, and cervical cancers. These tests are proven to lower mortality rates, however in northern Canada Indigenous cancer screening rates are low. This can be contributed to a lack of knowledge about cancer screening services, stigmas surrounding cancer screening methods, and unavailability. The project Attitudes toward Cancer in Indigenous Communities & Examining uptake of cancer Screening Services (ACCESS) conducted by Dr. Sharma and her team, showed that many were unaware of the recommended frequency for cancer screening services or did not think screening was required (see Figure 2). Based on these results, Indigenous communities in the north have prioritized promoting the uptake of cancer screening services and reducing cancer incidence and mortality rate. Communities and the IGHRG are working together to develop new ways to address these issues.

Cancer death rates per 100,000 by province and territories of Canada

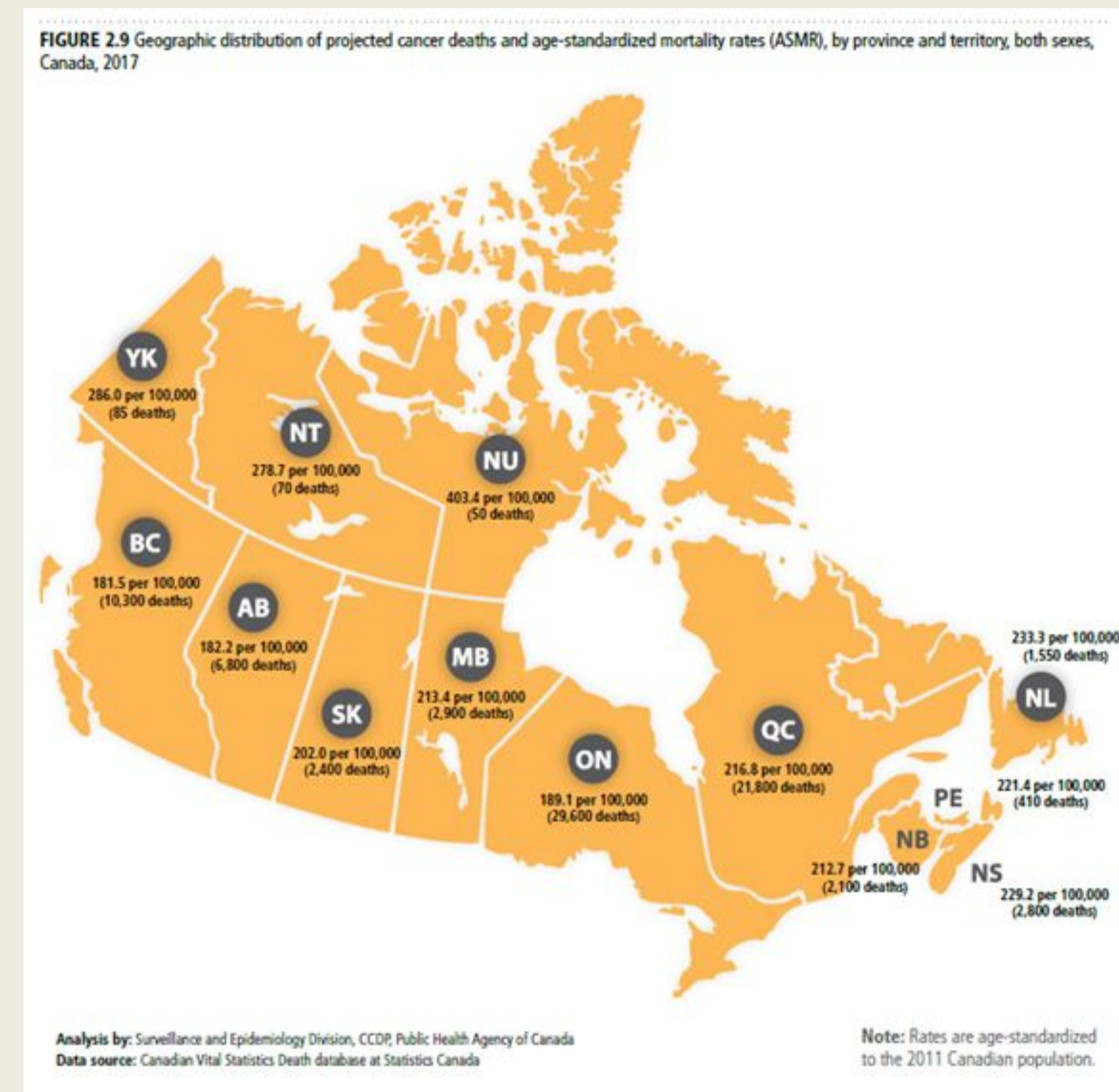


Figure 1
Canadian cancer statistics 2017, Canadian Cancer Society, Government of Canada

RESEARCH GOALS

- To promote Indigenous people to follow and understand the territorial recommendations regarding cancer screening services.
- To provide education materials on the different types of cancer screening services as well as the recommended frequency and the processes
- Community members provide their time and personal stories to create cancer screening information videos. This supports community members in relating to the videos and improves uptake of the information provided.

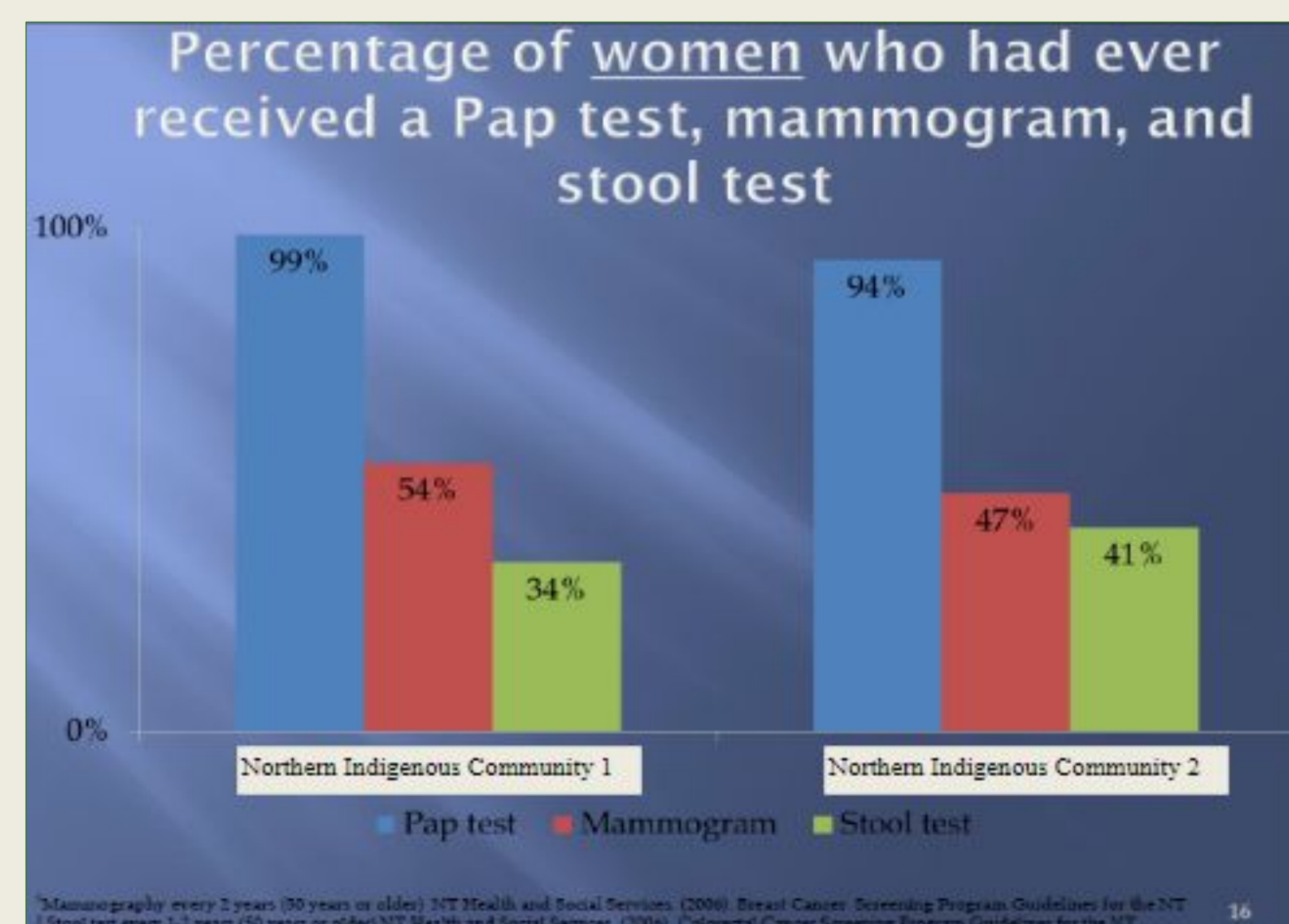


Figure 2, Preliminary data, (ACCESS project)

VIDEO PRODUCTION PROCESS

- The videos being produced address what is cancer, why cancer screening is important and the actual screening process.
- The IGHRG travelled to the communities and held feasts and meetings to talk with the community leaders and members to listen to ideas for the videos.
- The IGHRG is working with aRTLess Collective, a Yellowknife based video production firm which has extensive experience working in the North.
- Indigenous community members from Yellowknife and Fort Good Hope in the NWT participated in a table discussion styled setting and told their personal stories in the videos.
- At this time the filming is complete and final editing and production are underway.
- Once completed the videos will be evaluated by the participating communities and provided to the Government of NWT, local health centers, community health organizations and communities for distribution and use.
- Although initially recorded in English, the videos will later be translated to local Indigenous languages.

DISCUSSION

- Videos were planned with the aim to increase the uptake of cancer screening services.
- Existing resources were reviewed, scripts and story boards were developed ensuring language levels could reach everyone who might view the videos.
- It is hoped that the videos will increase the awareness and importance of how and when to receive cancer screening services for Indigenous community members.
- The IGHRG is working in partnership with the communities to develop, produce and release the videos with a goal to see a rise in cancer screening and survival rates for cervical, breast and colorectal cancers.

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REFERENCES

- Professor Sangita Sharma. Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics (2010)
- (Figure 1) Canadian cancer statistics 2017, Canadian Cancer Society, Government of Canada
- (figure 2) Data from the ACCESS project

ACRONYM LEGEND

IGHRG-Indigenous & Global Health Research Group
ACCESS-Attitudes Towards Cancer in Indigenous Communities & Examining uptake of Cancer Screening Services
FIT test-Fecal Immunochemical Test (colorectal cancer screening test)
CCSRI-Canadian Cancer Society Research Institute
CIHR-Canadian Institute of Health Research
GNWT-Government of Northwest Territories