

Participatory video: Exploring physical activity in northern First Nations communities

By: Keren Tang,¹ Community Wellness Program,² Cindy Jardine¹

¹School of Public Health, University of Alberta (UofA), Edmonton, Alberta; ²Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN), Northwest Territories

Abstract

Research exploring Aboriginal communities' perception of physical activity can have significant impact on developing culturally relevant health promotion strategies. This research offers a participatory approach to investigate physical activity in a northern Indigenous context as a collective responsibility that confers benefits beyond illness prevention. We collaborated with the Yellowknives Dene First Nations (YKDFN) Community Wellness Program. Inputs from the research collaborator were critical to the development of the research focus, process, and knowledge translation.

A participatory action research framework guided this project in two phases. Phase 1 applied the method of participatory video. Youths from YKDFN documented their communities' experience with and perspective of physical activity in a northern setting using video cameras. Conversations guided by SHOWeD allowed analysis with the youth about the content of the videos and images. Focus group with community members and leaders in phase 2 assessed the videos, facilitating critical reflection about active living and the implementation of culturally and geographically appropriate physical activity solutions. Content from the two phases were further analyzed using a constant comparison approach that abstracted themes and sub-themes.

Through the video project, we generated various meanings of physical activity. Youths identified physical activity as more than soccer and running, but also traditional games and household chores. They also identified various traditional physical activities practiced on the land. Focus group participants further commented on the role of technology, adult and family influence, as well as resource availability in affecting youth's physical activity level. Research outcomes and findings were disseminated during family suppers, where concrete next steps were developed to improve youth and community engagement with physical activity.

This research demonstrated various ways one First Nation community stays active. Traditional physical activity and life on the land are critical aspects for the Dene people in terms of health and wellbeing. Knowledge generated here will contribute to the current understanding of how physical activity is perceived by Indigenous peoples and also help to elucidate the role of health promotion in these communities, to one that reconciles different ways of life.

References:

1. Kumanyika, S. K., & Yancey, A. K. (2009). Physical activity and health equity: evolving the science. *American journal of health promotion : AJHP*, 23(6), S4–7.
2. Frohlich, K. L., Ross, N., & Richmond, C. (2006). Health disparities in Canada today: some evidence and a theoretical framework. *Health policy*, 79(2-3), 132–43.
3. Adelson, N. (2005). The embodiment of inequity: health disparities in aboriginal Canada. *Canadian journal of public health*. 96 Suppl 2, S45–61.
4. Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada. (2005). *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal People's Participation in Sport* (pp. 1–21). Retrieved from <http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/sc/pol/aborigin/index-eng.cfm>
5. Frisby, W., Reid, C. J., Millar, S., & Hoeber, L. (2005). Putting “ Participatory ” Into Participatory Forms of Action Research. *Journal of Sport Management*, 19, 367–386.
6. Mayan, M. J. (2009). *Essentials of Qualitative Inquiry*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc.
7. McHugh, T.-L. F., & Kowalski, K. C. (2010). “A new view of body image”: A school-based participatory action research project with young Aboriginal women. *Action Research*, 9(3), 220–241.
8. Jardine, C. G., & James, A. (2012). Youth researching youth: benefits, limitations and ethical considerations within a participatory research process. *International journal of circumpolar health*, 71(6), 1–9.
9. Damon, W. (2004). What is Positive Youth Development? *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591(1), 13–24.
10. Genuis, S. K., Jardine, C. G., & Chekoa Program. (2013). Social media as an instrument for youth engagement with antismoking messages. *CES4Health*. Retrieved September 4, 2013, from <http://www.ces4health.info/find-products/view-product.aspx?code=5ZJFF7XB>
11. Blazek, M., & Hraňová, P. (2012). Emerging relationships and diverse motivations and benefits in participatory video with young people. *Children's Geographies*, 10(2), 151–168.
12. Sitter, K. C. (2012). Participatory video: toward a method, advocacy and voice (MAV) framework. *Intercultural Education*, 23(6), 541–554.
13. Strauss, A.L. & Corbin, J. (1998). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In: Denzin NK, Lincoln YS, Eds. *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications. p.158-183.
14. Wang, C. C., Morrel-Samuels, S., Hutchison, P. M., Bell, L., & Pestronk, R. M. (2004). Flint Photovoice: community building among youths, adults, and policymakers. *American journal of public health*, 94(6), 911–3.
15. Wilson, S. (2001). What is indigenous research methodology? *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 25(2), 175.
16. Kirmayer, L., Simpson, C., & Cargo, M. (2003). Healing traditions: culture, community and mental health promotion with Canadian Aboriginal peoples. *Australasian Psychiatry*, 11(s1), S15–S23. doi:10.1046/j.1038-5282.2003.02010.x
17. Giles, A. R. (2005). *Power, policies, and politics: Women's involvement in Dene games in the Northwest Territories* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Alberta. ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2005. NR08643.