

Chapter 34

Testing the Waters: Participant Focus Testing of Well-Being Indicators for the Development of an Inuit Health Statistics Directory

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes focus group testing in a small community in the Labrador Inuit Land Claim area of the online information system 'Community Accounts,' developed by the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Key data users were engaged in a hands-on process to help determine what information and data would be useful in an Inuit Web directory. The purpose was to obtain a better understanding of how Inuit use statistics to better understand the broad determinants of health. Inuit continue to take further steps toward managing Inuit specific data in order to create comprehensive health policies and programs and affect decision-making.

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INTRODUCTION

Inuit Health and Statistics

Naasautit: Inuit Health Statistics is a national project created to enable Inuit regional organizations and communities in Canada to make better use of existing statistics to improve health outcomes. The key deliverable is an Inuit health statistics Web directory. The two-year project is funded through the Aboriginal Health Transition Fund of Health Canada (AHTF) as part of a larger Inuit Pan Canadian AHTF project. The *Naasautit:* Inuit Health Statistics¹ project aims to capture the available statistics on the determinants and health conditions of the 50,485 Inuit in 52 remote Arctic settlements in Canada.

This case study describes the focus group testing, in a small community in the Labrador Inuit Land Claim area, of the *Community Accounts*² online information system, developed by the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Key data users were engaged in a hands-on process to help determine what information and data would be useful in an Inuit Web directory. The purpose was to obtain a better understanding of how Inuit can use statistics to better understand the broad determinants of health. Inuit explored their own use of statistics and the meaning and value of indicators of “how people are doing”. Inuit continue to take further steps towards managing Inuit specific³ data in order to create comprehensive health policies and programs and affect decision-making.

THE NAASAUTIT: INUIT HEALTH STATISTICS PROJECT – BRINGING THE NUMBERS HOME

Naasautit: Inuit Health Statistics aims to help fill gaps in the understanding of health issues facing Inuit communities, Inuit regions and Pan-Canadian Inuit. The objectives of the project are to:

Figure 1.



- significantly contribute to the current state of knowledge of Inuit population health indicators;
- facilitate future Inuit population health research by greatly improving access to relevant information; and
- empower⁴ Inuit communities through capacity development to conduct their own Inuit perspective health research, thus providing a basis for more fully-informed Inuit knowledge translation and utilisation.

Naasautit: Inuit Health Statistics is a partnership between the Inuit Tuttarvingat, an Inuit research and information sharing centre of the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (the national Inuit representative body), and the four land claim organizations: Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (delegated by Makivik Corporation), and the Nunatsiavut Government in Labrador. Project direction and oversight comes from a Management Group of representatives from the project partners.

THE INUIT POPULATION IN CANADA

Census data show that on average the Inuit population in Canada is much younger than the non-Aboriginal population, and other Aboriginal Peoples. In 2006, the median age of the Inuit population was 22 years, compared with 40 years for non-Aboriginal people, 25 years for First Nations,

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