

Urban Metis Women's Identity and Experiences with Health Services in Toronto, Ontario

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Abstract : Métis peoples, while comprising over a third of the total Indigenous population in Canada, experience major gaps in health services that accommodate their cultural identities. This is problematic given Métis peoples experience severe disparities in health determinants and outcomes compared to the non-Indigenous Canadian population. At the same time, Métis are unlikely to engage in health services that do not value their cultural identities, often utilizing mainstream options. Given these contexts, this research aims to fill the culturally-safe health care gap for Métis peoples in Canada. It does this by engaging 56 urban Métis women who participated in a longitudinal cohort study, Our Health Counts (OHC) Toronto. Traditionally, Métis women were central to the health and well-being of their communities. However, due to decades of colonial legislation and forced land displacement, female narratives have been silenced, and Métis identities have been fractured. This has resulted in having direct implications on Métis people's current health and access to health services. Solutions to filling the Métis health service gap may lie in the all too often unacknowledged or missing voices of Métis women. Through a conversational method, this research will explore urban Métis women's perspectives on identity and their experiences with health services in Toronto. The goal of this research is to learn from urban Métis women on steps towards filling the health service gap. This research is currently in the data collection stage. Preliminary findings from the conversations will be disseminated. Policy recommendations for health service providers will be provided to better accommodate Métis people.

Keywords : indigenous health, Metis health, urban, health service access, identity

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