Urban Aboriginal Health
Readings

• Wilson & Cardwell 2012 on urban aboriginal health
Wilson & Cardwell 2012

• Drew on major health surveys from 2000-2001 era
• Looked at the social determinants of health for urban aboriginals
Urban Aboriginals

- 1 million + aboriginal folk in Canada
  - First Nations, Inuit, Metis
- Increasingly an urban population
  - 1950s: <7% urban
  - Early 1960s: 13%
  - 2000s: 50%+
- Yet health issues for this urban population little explored
Toronto: 2006 Census

- In 2006 census Toronto CMA had 26,575 aboriginal people
  - The biggest urban aboriginal population in Ontario
  - Just 0.5% of Toronto’s population
Toronto: 2016 Census

- Toronto CMA had 46,320 people of aboriginal identity.
  - 0.79% of CMA population
- Toronto City had 23,060 people of aboriginal identity.
  - 0.86% of the city’s population
- But recent research shows real population is 2x larger than census suggests
  - And seriously affected by poverty
Wilson & Cardwell

• Urban aboriginals tend to have higher rates of illness (morbidity) and higher rates of death (mortality) than the general population
• Suffer less cancer, more diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease. Obesity
• Tends to be a younger population
Wilson & Cardwell

• Urban aboriginals have more ill-health than non aboriginals
  • But some differences fade when you compare similar income, educational levels
• Major differences still remain
Inuit in Southern Canada

- Inuit population growing in the North, but growing twice as fast in the southern cities
Inuit in Southern Canada

- Ottawa and Montreal have the best direct air links to Iqaluit
- Montreal with air links to Nunavik
- Tend to have significant Inuit communities
  - The Inuit are 10% of Montreal’s indigenous population
  - Ottawa’s Vanier sometimes known as “Little Nunavut”
  - Area around Montreal’s Atwater Metro station became known as “Little Iqaluit”
Inuit in Southern Canada

• Inuit a significant part of the homeless population in Ottawa & Montreal
  • 45% of the indigenous homeless in Montreal, but only 10% of the city’s indigenous population
  • Homeless Inuit women in Montreal dying, going missing
Nunavik

• Nunavik a region of northern Quebec with a strong Inuit population
• Around 8,000 Inuit from Nunavik go to Montreal each year for medical treatment
  • A community of 150-200 at any given time
  • Medical travel represents about 60% of air passenger travel to/from Nunavik
• TB rates 250 times the national average
• Life expectancy 15 years below national average
Ullivik, Dorval QC

- Ullivik an Inuit health centre in Dorval QC
- Close to Trudeau airport, and flights to Iqaluit
- Centre established in Dorval after community opposition to the centre in Villeroy 2010
Ottawa

- **Ottawa: 3000 Inuit by 2015**
- Sufficient Inuit kids for Ottawa Carleton District School Board to run an Inuit kindergarten class in Vanier
- Montreal: Inuit youth able to participate in a dedicated Inuktitut post-secondary programme run by the Nunavik school board
- Nunavut cut funding 2019 for a similar programme in Ottawa. Doesn’t quite kill the programme on paper, but it will hurt.
  - Cuts about a year after the programme bought 3 apartment buildings in Sandy Hill to house the students
Wabano Health Centre

• In 2010 a dedicated aboriginal health centre opened in Ottawa
• Wabano Aboriginal Health Centre, 299 Montreal Rd
• Invites visitors in for Ottawa Doors Open 2010
• Big emphasis on mental health and building the capacities of the indigenous community in Ottawa