



‘Women are Supposed to be the leaders’: intersections of gender, race and colonization in HIV prevention with Indigenous young people.

Culture, Health & Sexuality

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One-Sentence Summary: Young people discuss how colonialism has demeaned women’s roles and degraded women’s sexuality, and how continuing cultural erasure and assimilationist policies have impacted their lives and on their bodies.

Reviewer: Amiya Fellows

Methods: A research team, composed of Indigenous young people, allies, university-based researchers, students, and community activists created this project to find data on young people’s thoughts on the intersection of gender, race, and colonization. Partnering with six communities across Canadian, the team hired, trained, and directed young-people coordinators, in each community, to organize weekend workshops to collect feedback and conduct a needs-assessment. The workshops had activities such as technical skills building and art making, during which they engaged in interactive activities developed by the Native Youth Sexual Health Network to teach about HIV, re-affirm, and support cultural pride, and inspire activism. The team worked with over 100 young people (over half identified as female) and 20 artists in six different communities. Following these workshops, in-depth interviews were conducted 1–2 months after the event to reflect on participants' experiences, the impact of the process, and their thoughts on the art created. All interviews were audio-recorded, and the data was then coded by a team of graduate students and analyzed in a collaborative participatory fashion.

Main Findings / Recommendations:

- When asked about the treatment of men and women in their communities, several young people quickly pointed to the ways European contact had disrupted traditional gender roles by switching their beliefs to see men better than women. Participants believed this led to women contracting HIV and being treated worse than men.
- The young people in this project were actively resisting colonization, sexism, and racism. They gave various suggestions for resistance and change. These suggestions and other activism related ideas related to HIV and gender relations, which most of the young people were aware of the thin line between the two.

Potential Issues:

- This study was conducted in Canada, resulting in specific Canadian residents that can relate.

Useful Summary Stats, Quotes:

- “In all, 63% of our research participants identified as female and the median age of participants was 16.”
- "The interviews undertaken as part of our project show that history and tradition cannot be, and are not, separated in the eyes of many Indigenous young people. "

Reviewers Opinions:

| | Strongly Disagree (1) | | Strongly Agree (5) | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Impactful for Indian Country? | | | X | | |
| Novel? | | X | | | |





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|--------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| Trustworthy? | | | X | | |
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Reference: Oliver, V., Flicker, S., Danforth, J., Konsmo, E., Wilson, C., Jackson, R.,

Restoule, J.-P., Prentice, T., Larkin, J., & Mitchell, C. (2015). 'women are supposed to be the leaders': Intersections of gender, race and colonisation in HIV prevention with indigenous young people. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 17(7), 906–919.

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