HEALTH, CLIMATE AND CHANGING NORTHERN COASTS

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The north is the bellwether for climate change.... including for health

Type, pace and rate of change creates urgency for response

Nature of change gives insight into southern effects
What does it mean to be healthy?

Health is the product of your life’s experiences and interactions with the world around you. Not just the lack of disease.

- Have basic needs for daily living
- Can cope with change & stress
- Can fulfill roles and expectations
Health = resilience

Stressors

thrive

Capacity to Cope

decline, disease, death

Harm Reduction and Recovery

Health promotion

TIME

Quality of Life

healthywildlife.ca
Interactions with the world around you

The Health Gradient

Individually oriented preventive action

Health hazards

Environmental health hazards
Lack of education
Inadequate food and nutrition
Unemployment
Poor Housing
Poverty


Relations with the environment crucial to setting the health gradient in the north
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's model for the social determinants of Inuit health

Nature and health

Contributions

Food

Income

Culture

Threats

Declines

Food Safety

Food Safety
Climate change & coastal change (Biota)

HAZARDS
• New infections cycles affecting food safety and nature safety
• Release of contaminants affecting food and water safety

LOST VALUES & SERVICES
• Less accessible country food = lower food security
• Less hunting tourism revenue = lower income
• Less opportunity for traditional cultural activities

Post et al., 2013. Science
Climate change & coastal change (Land)

SEA ICE AND PERMAFROST

Travel
- Access to services

Erosion
- Displacement
- Social disruption

Travel
- Occupational safety

New Employment
- Income
- Impacts on land
Health is interconnected

The Effects of Unpredictable Weather on the Inuit Nunangat Communities

- Weather knowledge is less frequently shared between generations
- Elders and others are no longer predicting weather as often
- Environment and weather have become more unpredictable
- Travel routes have changed and are often longer
- Increased cost for fuel because of longer travel
- Youth no longer have traditional weather knowledge
- Use of GPS and satellite imagery
- Travel has become more dangerous and uncertain
- People are traveling on land less
- Loss of physical, emotional, and mental well-being benefits from time on land
- Over-reliance on modern technologies without pairing it with traditional knowledge
- Use of science forecasting and need for mainstream weather forecast inclusion
- There are more cases of people being stranded on land and more casualties
- Increased communication within and between communities
- Fewer hunting opportunities
- Increase in cases of “spring fever” from being stuck in communities
- Need to also maintain reliance on traditional weather prediction skills
- Need to create venue for Elders to advise and teach youth
- Generational exchange of information regarding the environment
- People are bringing extra supplies for these cases
- Decrease in revenues from loss of hunting opportunities
- Less available country foods
- Country food exchanges between and within communities
- Increased cost to buy these foods
- Increased reliance on store-bought foods
- Health impacts

http://www.ehatlas.ca/remote-communities/inuit-nunangat
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Changes in relations with living things

Changes in relations with the land
Predisposing vulnerabilities

Average Scores for Community Well-Being Index

The Community Well-Being (CWB) Index uses information from the Canadian Census from each community to assign a well-being score for each 5-year Census period.

What to do?

Reciprocal Care

- Separating our health from nature’s health is folly
- Reciprocal care of community and the environment
- New governance for collaborative care

Coping Capacity

- Remove pre-existing inequity in health status and determinants of health
- Produce the conditions for health through ‘healthscape” approach