

PREGNANCY, MATERNAL HEALTH AND POVERTY IN INDIGENOUS WOMEN

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Indigenous women in Canada face a number of unique challenges during pregnancy that pose a threat to the wellbeing of themselves and their infant.



16x

More likely for Indigenous women to be required to travel ~200km to deliver her baby.¹



Rate of infant mortality is 2x higher for Indigenous women.³

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Racism in Healthcare

Indigenous women in Canada experience the effects of both interpersonal and structural racism in the form of mistreatment and segregation.²

Miscarriage and Infertility

- Receive inconsistent health instructions leading to adverse events
 - ex. whether smoking cessation is beneficial during pregnancy or would result in more stress for the infant.³
 - ex. stillbirth, perinatal birth, low birth weight, or prematurity.³

Access to Resources

Factors that contribute to poor health outcomes:⁴

- geographical location
- cost
- lack of knowledge about services
- language barriers
- transportation

EXTERNAL STRESSORS

Mental Health

- Indigenous mothers have higher risks for postpartum depression
 - Due to risk factors such as low education, lack of social support, abuse trauma and antidepressant use.⁵

Substance Abuse

- Higher rates of alcohol and drug consumption are reported in Indigenous women
 - Due to living in high-risk environments where there are overwhelming amounts of socioeconomic issues.⁶





ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Toxic Hazards and Exposures

- Poor access to clean drinking water.
- Exposure to toxic chemicals.
- Poor air quality.
- Close proximity to industrial facilities.⁷

Living Conditions and Communities in Poverty

- Low socioeconomic status is a key determinant of structural safety.
- Safety is diminished by factors such as high crime and poor infrastructure.⁸



1 in 5 Indigenous communities in Canada are under water advisories which require residents to boil or stop drinking water.⁸

HEALTH DETERMINANTS

Access to Food

- Low income causes a lack of healthy food sources and high food costs
 - Leads indigenous people to resort to non-nutritious and poor food options
 - Causes poor mental and physical health.⁹

Chronic Diseases

- Higher rates of chronic diseases such as renal failure, renal disease and especially diabetes due to deficiencies in their diets.⁷



WHERE DO WE GO NEXT?

Support Groups



- Provide space for new mothers to share insights.
- Fill gap of support that may exist in a new mother's life.⁵

Prenatal Care Services



- Allow women to receive information and care.
- Reduce incidence of infant complications.³

Food Programs



- Supply mothers with nutritional care needed to nurture baby.
- Reduce severity of nutritional disparities for Indigenous women.⁹

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