The Participatory Research Newsletter

This monthly newsletter aims to highlight the participatory research initiatives emerging from Participatory Research @ McGill (PRAM), and Centro de Investigación de Enfermedades Tropicales (CIET), as well as share new opportunities for projects, courses, funding, and more!

Note, the CIET-PRAM Newsletter is offered in the following languages:

Français | Español

A Month in Review

An ever busy team, below are a few updates from the CIET-PRAM network.

Monthly Meeting

The Emic vs. Etic Divide on the Health of Tribes in India: A Grounded Approach

The monthly CIET-PRAM meeting is an opportunity to share project updates, present research protocols, and more.

Last month, Dr Nishant Saxena presented his work on the emic vs. etic divide in the health of tribes in India. As a researcher at the Indian Council of Medical Research – National Institute of Research in Tribal Health, he explored the intersection of medical anthropology and epidemiology in tribal health. His insights, informed by his role with the International Union of Anthropological & Ethnological Sciences (IUAES), provided a nuanced perspective on Indigenous health research.

Presentation

First International Symposium on Tribal Health '25 | Nagpur, India

In February, PRAM team member, Dr Iván Sarmiento, delivered a presentation titled "Safe Birth in Cultural Safety: The Contribution of Indigenous Traditional Midwifery in Mexico" at the First International Symposium on Tribal Health '25.

His talk emphasized the critical role Indigenous midwives play in enhancing maternal health outcomes by integrating traditional knowledge with culturally safe birthing practices. Dr. Sarmiento explored how these

midwives, through their deep understanding of cultural safety, have contributed to improving birthing experiences and reducing risks in Indigenous communities.

Making Connections

Visit to the Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre

Dr Iván Sarmiento and Natalia Reinoso Chávez PhD(c) recently visited Nunavik, Québec to spend a productive week with colleagues at the Ungava Tulattavik Health Centre (UTHC).

A sincere thank you to Larry Watt (Director) and Chantal Duchesne for their time and collaboration. Their discussions focused on the health centre's strong commitment to promoting culturally safe care, and we look forward to supporting their efforts and deepening our partnership in the future!

Bauchi State, Nigeria | COVID-19 Recovery Project Update

Based on findings from fuzzy cognitive mapping sessions and baseline surveys on the impacts of COVID-19 in Northern Nigeria, the team in Bauchi met with local authorities to discuss the evidence and potential adjustments to public programs.

The authorities listened attentively as the Bauchi team outlined the specific challenges communities faced, including hunger, food insecurity, and family conflicts. The survey also highlighted the limited reach of official recovery programs, an important insight for decision-makers as they consider future actions to better support these communities.

Meanwhile, by the end of February, the team conducted the final survey to document the improvements resulting from the community-defined interventions.

New Project Launch

We are excited to share our new project, Youth Co-Design Prevention of Gendered Personal and Interpersonal Violence in Botswana. This initiative addresses the systemic and personal causes of gender violence and suicide among youth in Botswana, an upper middle-income country facing significant public health challenges. With a focus on equity, the project highlights poverty as a key risk factor for both gender violence and suicide, particularly in regions with high income inequality. Botswana has a high GINI coefficient- 0.53, as reported by UNICEF in 2023 - making it the 9th most unequal country in the world.

Through this project, we will collaborate with disadvantaged youth to better understand their experiences and reduce their risks of violence and suicide. Our preparatory work has already revealed that youth in rural areas perceive poverty and its associated challenges as major contributors to violence. This project serves as a precursor to a larger, four-year effort to explore youth perceptions of partner violence and suicide causes and work with various stakeholders - such as young men and women, service providers, community leaders, and policymakers - to co-create and implement actionable solutions.

Of particular note, this study is one of the first in Botswana to incorporate gender diversity into the research process, ensuring that we capture the voices of all youth! By disaggregating data collection by binary gender and collaborating with an LGBTIQ+ advocacy group, we will ensure an inclusive approach, allowing participants to self-identify their gender and sexual orientation. An intersectional gender analysis will explore how various identity factors interact with experiences of violence. Additionally, narratives from dialogue group participants, including those from LGBTIQ+ youth, will provide valuable insights into the impact of the pilot intervention.

Congratulations to the applicants: Dr Anne Cockcroft (PI), Dr Neil Andersson, Dr Claudia Mitchell, Dr Iván Sarmiento, Dr Jai Shah, Kabo Ng'ombe, Dr Lehana Thabane, and co-investigators Umaira Ansari and Boitumelo Kgakole! A special thank you to the funders: Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Healthy Brains, Healthy Lives.

Exploring Intergenerational Approaches to Women's Health

Our **Authentic Participatory Research with Older Adults for Cognitive Health** (APROACH) pilot in Botswana and Montreal focuses on the critical role of intergenerational learning in cognitive health. With women disproportionately affected by dementia - both as those at risk and as caregivers - this initiative engages older and younger generations in setting achievable goals and working toward them collaboratively. Beyond improving cognitive well-being, APROACH helps reduce stigma around dementia and caregiving, potentially shaping a new paradigm for aging and brain health.

As part of APROACH, older women in Botswana created a **cellphilm** to share their experiences with their families, particularly about the challenges of offloading childcare responsibilities. In another initiative, they composed a song and dance to express their concerns about the treatment they receive at the health centre. Once their words and movements are finalized, they will perform it for the health centre staff and possibly present it to the kgotla (traditional community gathering). The song, like many social songs, begins with:

Dumelang batsadi, re ya dumedisa (Greetings elders, we are greeting)
Rona Bagodi, re ya sokola rotlhe (As old people, we are all suffering)
Check-up, ba e baya kgakala (Check-ups are scheduled far apart)
Rona bagodi gare tsewe ko di kokelong (We old women are not treated with respect at the health centre)

Advancing Culturally Safe Perinatal Care

We are excited to share news from Dr Hilah Silver, a postdoctoral fellow under the supervision of Dr Neil Andersson whose groundbreaking work focuses on promoting culturally safe perinatal care for Indigenous communities. Over the past year, Hilah has continued to make significant strides in her research, collaborating with Inuit, Cree, and allied partners to co-design and implement health interventions that prioritize cultural safety.

This past year, Hilah co-designed, implemented, and evaluated culturally safe health interventions for Indigenous perinatal wellness alongside Inuit, Cree, and allied partners, with a strong focus on knowledge translation and exchange.

She and research associate Elisapi Padlayat presented findings from community and service provider consultations on culturally safe Inuit birth at the Canadian Association of Perinatal and Women's Health Nurses conference. Hilah also shared insights from a medical record review (2015–2019) on Inuit families transferred to the MUHC through in-service presentations at the MUHC, IHC, TUHC, and to Quebec health officials. Her team at MUHC continues to implement and assess co-designed maternity care interventions. In collaboration with Wapikoni Mobile, they co-produced an educational film featuring Inuit and Cree birth stories. Their work, featured on CBC and in the McGill Tribune, earned the Prix Hippocrate for innovation in inclusive, cross-disciplinary care for marginalized populations.

In the coming year, Hilah will lead *Anirraup asianit nullangavik* (Feeling at Home Away from Home), a two-year pilot project supporting Inuit perinatal wellness for those birthing outside their communities. In partnership with the NRBHSS, IHC, and TUHC, the project will adapt Ilagiiluta, a perinatal wellness program. As a co-investigator, she will also co-design training to strengthen midwifery capacity in remote areas with Inuulitsivik Midwifery Services and Toronto Metropolitan University, while working with Université de Laval to improve access to country food for Inuit families in the south.

Stay tuned for more updates on Hilah's ongoing work! This important initiative has been made possible with support from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research through the PRAM project: Decolonizing Birth with Nunavik Inuit Women Transferred to High-Risk Hospitals for Childbirth. A heartfelt thank you to the entire PRAM team for their invaluable contributions.

Podcast Series: Participation Science Dialogues

We are excited to announce our next episode of Participation Science Dialogues, focused on the theme of culturally safe birth!

This episode delves into the importance of integrating cultural safety into birthing practices, highlighting the contributions of Indigenous midwifery traditions in fostering safer, more inclusive childbirth experiences. Join us for an enlightening discussion on how cultural safety can reshape maternal healthcare practices for diverse communities.

Listen to Episode 2 now!

Latest Publications

Highlighted below are some of the most recent publications from the industrious CIET-PRAM team:

An Approach to Providing Timely Mental Health Services to Diverse Youth Populations

Authors: Srividya N. Iyer, Patricia Boksa, Ridha Joober, Jai Shah, Rebecca Fuhrer, **Neil Andersson**, Shalini Lal, Giuseppe D'Andrea, Nora Morrison, Valerie Noel, Daniel Rabouin, Tovah Cowan, Kathleen MacDonald, Mary Anne Levasseur, Feodor Poukhovski-Sheremetyev, Amal Abdel-Baki, Lacey Augustine, Kevin Friese, Isabelle Godin, Katherine Hay, Daphne Hutt-MacLeod, Vickie Plourde, Norma Rabbitskin, Paula Reaume-Zimmer, Cécile Rousseau, Heather Rudderham, Adam Abba-Aji, Diane Aubin, Liana Urichuk, Helen Vallianatos, Shirin Golchi, Ina Winkelmann, Jessica Chisholm-Nelson & Ashok Malla

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Indications for Transfer and Care Pathways of Inuit Transferred to a Tertiary Centre for Childbirth in Québec, Canada: A Chart Review 2015–2019

Authors: **Hilah Silver**, Christina Antinora, Marianne Plourde, Ariane Bergeron, Lydia Mychaltchouk, Karen Wou & **Neil Andersson**

Visit our website for more publications from the CIET-PRAM team

Departmental Newsletters

McGill | Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences | Department of Family Medicine

Ask 5 Podcast

The Institute of Health Sciences Education and the Office of Ed-TECH in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences are excited to share their next episode from their ongoing podcast series, Ask 5! The episode is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music, Audible, Podbean, and iheartradio and a video version of the podcast is available on YouTube.

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